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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Alfano	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli Frieri

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Security challenges in the Mediterranean

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Security challenges in the Mediterranean

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Italian presidency for convening this meeting.

The word "Mediterranean" literally means "in the middle of the Earth". Figuratively, too, the Mediterranean has found itself, since time immemorial, at the confluence of civilizations, cultures, religions, trade and migration. Developments in the region continue to shape the history and politics of the world. The Mediterranean Sea provides immense economic resources, such as hydrocarbons and fish stocks, and invaluable trade routes. However, its benefits depend on stability and cooperation.

Indeed, the situation in the Mediterranean illustrates that peace and security are inseparable from democratic, economic and social progress, and from the advancement of gender, youth, minority and human rights. Events over the past few years in the region have forcefully — and painfully — made that clear.

Today the Mediterranean faces serious challenges on multiple fronts: the illicit trade in narcotics, weapons and petroleum products; large movements of refugees and migrants, who are preyed upon by human smugglers and traffickers; and maritime piracy. The narcotics trade is also generating deadly spillover effects, such as increased drug use and health crises.

In parts of the region, fragility is being exacerbated by systematic violations of human rights and violence against women and girls. The Mediterranean is also suffering from severe environmental degradation and natural-resource constraints. In recent years, food scarcity and sharp rises in prices have led to social and political unrest. Long-festering regional wounds and sectarian divides have been made worse by atrocity crimes, terrorism, attempts to annihilate minorities, the

plundering of cultural heritage, forced displacement and the use of chemical weapons.

Libya's stability is vital for the region. Yet, after years of prolonged transition, the country's institutions remain deeply divided. The United Nations is committed to helping the Libyan people reach an inclusive political settlement. Instability in the Sahel region has contributed to an increase in irregular migration towards Europe. The United Nations will continue to support the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the G-5 Joint Force, including through the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians is also critical. The United Nations remains committed to providing all possible support towards a just, comprehensive and lasting resolution of the conflict through the two-State solution. A comprehensive political settlement in Cyprus would also mitigate political tensions in the region.

Da'esh will continue to thrive unless the deep political roots of the Syrian conflict are resolved through a credible and comprehensive political process, as foreseen under resolution 2254 (2015). The security gains against terrorist groups in Libya, Iraq and elsewhere may prove reversible if we do not accelerate reconstruction and economic recovery.

I commend refugee host countries for their generosity. There is a clear need to address the drivers of displacement. We must also address the worrisome increase in xenophobia and discrimination against refugees, migrants and minorities. That is a shared global responsibility. It is essential to re-establish the integrity of the refugee-protection regime on both sides of the Mediterranean and to increase resettlement and relocation programmes. Trafficking in human beings should not be isolated from trafficking in cultural property, drugs, weapons and oil, which benefit militias, terrorists and armed groups.

The Libya sanctions regime restricts the movement of arms and related material into and out of Libya. The Panels of Experts on Libya and the Sudan have been investigating the financing of armed groups. Along with the newly re-established Mali sanctions regime, I hope that those tools will be useful in supporting Governments and regions working towards peaceful transitions.

All too often, responses to security challenges in the Mediterranean are undertaken largely or solely through traditional security arrangements or ad hoc solutions. Such approaches carry the risk of prolonging unacceptable status quos or worsening situations if not backed by efforts to address the underlying root causes. Our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have an important role to play in that regard.

The Mediterranean is a global junction of mutually enriching cultures, societies and economies. Yet violence and hatred are threatening that dynamism, to the detriment of the entire world. We should do our utmost to resolve the worst crises of the region, so that it can then continue to contribute its best. I count on countries in the Mediterranean and beyond to reaffirm their proud tradition of openness and solidarity.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, which was, as usual, smart and visionary.

It is now my pleasure to deliver Italy's national statement.

The focus of today's Security Council meeting is on an issue of worldwide implications. The Mediterranean is a small sea, almost the size of a large lake when seen on a map. However, it is where much of our global security is at stake. It is a fact that a great number of the world's crises originate in the Mediterranean basin — the spread of Da'esh, Libya's instability, the Syrian war, new tension in Lebanon, the dangers posed by foreign terrorist fighters, the fragile situation in the Western Balkans, the migration crisis, and the list goes on and on.

Although the Mediterranean amounts to only approximately 1 per cent of the world's surface, a significant part of our global stability and security is played out in that Sea. Italy, located at the centre of the Mediterranean, is bearing the brunt of that insecurity. Our strategy has been to combine solidarity and security. For example, in the course of the migration crisis, we have proved that it is possible to save more than half a million lives at sea and, at the same time, counter fundamentalism and extremists who despise the values of our open and democratic society.

However, we need to do more together as global partners to control the routes that today could be taken by foreign terrorist fighters, following the defeat of Da'esh in Iraq and in Syria. The global coalition

against Da'esh has neutralized the safe havens in which terrorists could mastermind attacks against all of us. Italy has done its part as the second-largest contributor to that coalition in Iraq. We have trained almost 30,000 military and police units, but we must remain ever-vigilant against the spread of Da'esh in the Mediterranean and the concrete risk of foreign terrorist fighters returning to North Africa and to Europe.

Therefore, we must deepen information-sharing among our intelligence agencies in order to identify jihadists and halt them in their quest for destruction. Our commitment against terror must be extended far and wide, including in the Sahel, where instability directly affects the security of the Mediterranean. In Libya, after being forced out of Sirte, Da'esh remains a threat, with its roots also in the Sahel. That too is a reason that Libya remains a key challenge for the Security Council. However, in order to further emphasize the moral burden of improving the lives of refugees and migrants who are exploited by criminal organizations in Libya, we must take on greater shared responsibility, with more humanitarian assistance and long-term development.

On the political process in Libya, I will not repeat what I said yesterday in this Chamber (see S/PV.8104). However, I will stress once again that it is crucial for all of us to support the action plan of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. If we miss that chance, all of us, not only Libyans, will pay a heavy price.

The tragic story of Syria should be a reminder to the Libyans that a negotiated solution is vital, and that there is no military short cut. Regional tensions and brutal actions by the Al-Assad regime have made peace in Syria difficult for far too long. Our key objective should always remain the same — to support the political process led by the United Nations. We call on the countries around this table and on the entire United Nations membership to redouble their efforts to encourage a genuine commitment by the Syrian parties to engage in negotiations.

We are also concerned by the latest developments in Lebanon, where Italy has invested deeply in peace and stability, especially in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon peacekeeping mission. We call on all parties to respect the independence and integrity of Lebanon's democratic institutions. There is no role in

Lebanon for any foreign forces or militaries other than the legitimate security forces of the Lebanese State.

In an interconnected world where stability and security are tested by gross violations of human rights and a humanitarian crisis, it is the responsibility of the international community to react. Our reaction must be built upon more political dialogue and more security cooperation, as well as more cultural collaboration. Italy considers culture to be a key pillar of sustainable development. In order to create lasting political solutions in the Mediterranean, we are convinced that we need to invest in human capital, especially in the education of youth. Preserving cultural heritage is also a way to tackle extremism. That is why Italy, together with France, promoted resolution 2347 (2017), which was the first of its kind on the destruction of cultural heritage in armed conflict. Terrorists who destroy cultural sites want to erase peoples' identities. We should therefore always protect such rich and moderate identities, which have shaped a common culture of dialogue and mutual respect in the Mediterranean for millennia.

In the interest of the security of the Mediterranean, it is also crucial to defend religious freedom and protect religious minorities. If religious freedom is protected, the rule of law and security can be asserted. If such protection is absent, the consequence is instability. For fanatics, religion is only a pretext. They want to hold God hostage to their evil ideologies. Therefore, we must do more to separate those who join their hands in prayer from those who take up arms.

We also recognize that more women have to be protagonists in the Mediterranean. In October, in Rome, we launched the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. It is important to strengthen preventive diplomacy through the greater involvement of women in mediation.

The Mediterranean may be troubled by numerous challenges, but it is also a sea of many opportunities. It is a market of 500 million consumers. It makes up 10 per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP). That GDP grows at approximately 4.5 per cent annually. It is also where 20 per cent of maritime traffic and 30 per cent of the oil trade take place.

Will the Mediterranean region evolve into a meeting place of cultures that trade freely and cross-fertilize civilizations as it did once before? Or will it devolve into a region of terror, social despair and unrest? The answer very much depends upon the willingness and

capacity of the international community to strongly confront all security challenges and simultaneously promote a pluralistic society that does not marginalize its youth, women or minorities. Those are the values that inspired the Charter of the United Nations. They are values that still ensure stability and development all across the world. In a region that connects Europe, Africa and Asia, the dividends of peace and security are huge and global. It is up to us to seize them.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Italian presidency for convening today's meeting. I thank you, Sir, for honouring the Council with your presence and for leading today's meeting.

The Mediterranean is in a strategically unique geographic location. It is the heart of the old world. It is the cradle and intersection of civilization. It has been a cultural beacon for the entire world. The Mediterranean has been a source of inspiration for peoples in the West and the East. It has been a bridge of communication between the West and the East. It has had a very unique cultural nature for the peoples of the Mediterranean that is based on diversity, tolerance and acceptance of others.

The crisis that we are witnessing in the Mediterranean has made the region a destination for foreign terrorist fighters. It is also a destination for returnees. Various terrorist organizations have found new ways to finance their terrorist activities, such as trafficking in petroleum, the destruction and trafficking in cultural artefacts and trafficking in persons, not to mention that some Governments are sponsoring terrorism in order to achieve political aims. They are providing terrorists with arms and funds. They also facilitate the transit of foreign terrorist fights. Combating terrorist challenges in the Mediterranean requires adopting a comprehensive approach. We also need to address the root causes of terrorism without any discrimination. In Iraq and Syria, we cannot focus on combating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) if its fighters can escape to Libya and the Sahel. That would not lead to combating terrorism. Rather, it would temporarily export the problem to a different region. We must combat the root causes of terrorism

and halt any support that is being given to terrorists. We must ensure compliance with Security Council resolutions, especially those relating to counter-terrorism and combating terrorist discourse. We must also ensure the implementation of relevant sanctions.

The Mediterranean intersects the Sahel region. That is why it is an important priority to ensure stability in the Sahel. It affects security and stability in the Mediterranean. Recently, we have seen that the security of the Sahel affects the security of the Mediterranean. We are witnessing the deterioration of the security situation in Libya and Mali, as well as the emergence of a security vacuum. It is hard to control the borders, especially in remote deserts. That has led to the creation of safe havens for terrorist organizations and organized crime networks.

At this juncture, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force in combating such threats. The international community has a responsibility to support such an ambitious initiative. It is important to invest in the Joint Force. It will yield positive results, and such an investment would bear fruit.

It is also important to redouble efforts to implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. It addresses the different challenges in the region from a comprehensive, holistic perspective that takes into account development, security and humanitarian dimensions, which are all interrelated and intertwined.

The Mediterranean suffers from water scarcity, especially in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. Egypt believes that any serious approach to preventing crises cannot overlook water scarcity. We are witnessing increasing challenges to development that are related to environmental challenges. Therefore, water scarcity might be a reason for future wars. That is why it is incumbent upon us to work together to guarantee cooperation among different Mediterranean countries, so as to ensure development and the availability of water. That is why Egypt has signed bilateral and multilateral agreements with its neighbours and with other countries along the Nile River to ensure cooperation without causing harm to the environment and based on the principle of prior notification. In that way, countries can use the water in a responsible manner.

Forced displacement is a direct result of the security and development challenges we are witnessing in the Mediterranean. Every year, millions of people

escape from armed conflict, persecution, violence, terrorism, destitution and lack of food security, or they are escaping from the negative repercussions of climate change, natural disasters or other factors. Egypt believes it is important to adopt a holistic approach to address the root causes of forced displacement. Such an approach should focus on the development dimension in the countries of origin and in the host countries. Countries hosting refugees and migrants should make efforts to create more possibilities to welcome migrants and refugees. We cannot focus only on security solutions and close our borders. That runs contrary to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. Egypt welcomes the efforts to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. In that way, countries can share the burden and the responsibilities. It will ultimately ensure the dignity of refugees and migrants.

In conclusion, the security approach in dealing with the problems in the Mediterranean has proven to be flawed. It is not conducive to restoring stability in the region. All parties must cooperate to combat the serious challenges and to address the root causes of the problems. We will overcome the challenges only through a genuine partnership based on capacity-building, and in a way that ensures stability in the Mediterranean. It will again make the Mediterranean a bridge for cultures, a bridge for development rather than being an open grave for ambitious young people who yearn for a better future. We cannot waste this human potential, which could completely change the landscape in the Mediterranean.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): It is really humbling to speak in this debate after the briefing, as always stimulating, by the Secretary-General, and now by the representatives of Italy and Egypt, two prominent Mediterranean countries. I want to thank you, Mr. President, as well as Italy, for initiating this discussion. As the Secretary-General clearly articulated, the security challenges in the Mediterranean region are the consequence of a confluence of factors at play in the immediate region and beyond.

Today, perhaps more than ever, the prosperity, stability and security of the peoples of the Mediterranean region and their neighbours are bound together by challenges that are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. They include conflict, terrorism, violent extremism, multidimensional poverty, climate change, forced displacement, organized crime and political instability. They are all transboundary in nature.

Overcoming them requires comprehensive approaches, regional perspectives and new partnerships at all levels.

This is not the type of discussion we normally have in the Security Council. Most days we meet to discuss one report, one country, one conflict. Yet it is becoming more and more evident that most of today's conflicts do not exist in a vacuum, within neatly defined borders. Likewise, we are also recognizing that modern conflicts are being driven not by one issue, but are a function of how different drivers — such as poverty, inequality and climate change, to name a few — interact with one another, and of the cumulative impact on individuals and societies.

It is clear, therefore, that our responses must follow a similar logic if we are to be effective. We must meet people's present needs based on their realities, while at the same time building resilience and investing in peaceful societies. Protecting human dignity and human rights is not only the surest way to prevent conflict, but also the foundation for building peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies. Today marks a welcome opportunity for the Council to zoom out and to take a broader perspective in order to discuss the root causes of security challenges in the Mediterranean region and how to address them. With that in mind, I want to make five brief points.

First, the most vulnerable within society are hit hardest when factors such as instability, underdevelopment and terrorism combine. It is essential that we continue to respond to the needs of those people in the short and medium term. That includes providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance, while at the same time building the resilience of individuals and communities against future shocks. It also means responding to the needs of those displaced as a result of poverty, conflict and insecurity, whose human rights must be upheld. We are particularly concerned about the current situation for refugees and migrants in parts of the Mediterranean region.

The Secretary-General has very often — and I think very rightly — spoken about the need to enhance the dignity of refugees. And he has often stressed the need to re-establish the integrity of the refugee-protection regime. All States must comply with the international human rights and refugee frameworks, particularly when it comes to detention. As I said in this Chamber only yesterday (see S/PV.8104), the situation in Libya

is unacceptable in that regard, and further efforts are needed to ensure that international standards are met.

Secondly, our overarching focus must be on sustaining peace and preventing conflicts from emerging in the first place, or when they do, responding and resolving them quickly. Building on the sustaining peace agenda, the Security Council and the United Nations system as a whole must be more effective in addressing conflicts in the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions early on, including by enhancing analysis, understanding of root causes and information sharing. The Council needs to draw upon more integrated analysis from the entire United Nations system in order for it to effectively assess, address, prevent and respond to conflicts and threats to international peace and security. I very much believe that the reform effort of the Secretary-General is meant precisely to improve that part of our work.

Thirdly, we need to expand our ability to manage long-term structural risks. That includes identifying and responding to the risks of instability and insecurity arising from the interaction of climate change and social, economic and political factors. The Council has already recognized the adverse effects of climate change on stability in the Lake Chad region, and called for adequate risk assessments, risk-management strategies and early-warning mechanisms. The Council must remain alert to those issues.

Fourthly, we know that many of the challenges facing the Mediterranean region originate in chronic underdevelopment, poverty, human rights violations and abuses, weak governance and a lack of opportunities. Hence, any long-term strategy needs to tackle those issues as a matter of priority. That includes addressing youth unemployment, social exclusion and inequality; respect for, and enjoyment of, human rights, including freedom of expression and of assembly; creating economic opportunities and a society built on the rule of law; and sustainable growth — just as you stressed, Mr. President. Above all, we need to see dedicated and determined implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, with its aim to leave no one behind, in itself constitutes a powerful tool for prevention. There are established links between gender inequality, political instability and underdevelopment. For that reason, the full and effective participation of women in decision-making at all levels is necessary in order to create stability and achieve sustainable development in the region.

Finally, in order to adopt an approach that is truly comprehensive, we need true partnerships among States, regional organizations and among people. We are very encouraged by the ever-increasing cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations and we support, as others have said, the Group of Five for the Sahel in all its efforts. The European Union has a key role to play in promoting security and prosperity inside and outside the borders of the Union. The upcoming African Union-European Union Summit in Abidjan at the end of this month provides an important opportunity to strengthen crucial partnerships, with a timely focus on regional investment in youth.

Situated at the intersection of three continents, the Mediterranean has acted throughout history as a melting pot for culture, trade and people. The new types of complex security challenges facing the Mediterranean region are by no means unique. They are being replicated in different regions throughout the world. Responding will require us to work together, with the whole of the United Nations system supporting national and regional efforts with a range of flexible, integrated and innovative tools. Only by joint action can we respond to those overlapping challenges and ensure a better future for all.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for presiding over this meeting of the Security Council and for everything that Italy does so effectively in tackling the security challenges in the Mediterranean region. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on this complex set of issues before us.

It is all too often that we discuss the consequences of instability in the Council, and those consequences form some of the biggest threats that we all face: terrorism, modern slavery, disorderly mass migration and so on. I welcome this opportunity today to dig beneath the surface and to consider the root causes, as previous speakers have done.

In many cases, it is a Government's lack of respect for human rights — whether through inability or unwillingness — that leads to conflict, mass displacement and abuses. Terrorists and armed criminal groups have exploited the breakdown of State authority in parts of the Sahel and in Libya to exploit people. They use their profits from smuggling, human trafficking and modern slavery to fuel even more instability, which in turn damages the economic opportunities

that Governments should be offering their citizens. That then further fuels displacement, terrorism and modern slavery. Today I want to set out what the United Kingdom is doing to address those root causes.

First of all, we are totally committed to the Secretary-General's agenda of preventing conflict. We are substantially increasing our investments in fragile States to strengthen their resilience; we have implemented new early-warning and early action systems that help prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict. And we will continue to help the United Nations to strengthen its conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding capacity.

The United Kingdom is proud to be the largest donor to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and, in the Security Council, as penholder on Libya, we are at the forefront of international efforts to help Libya overcome the political and security challenges that it faces. As we discussed yesterday (see S/PV.8104), an inclusive political deal negotiated within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement is the best way of stabilizing Libya and tackling the criminal networks that make it a transit route for illegal migration. It is also the best way of developing Libya's huge economic potential.

We recognize that we need to reduce the space in which terrorists and people traffickers thrive across the region. It is those groups that too often also cause, or exploit, instability and conflict. We therefore encourage all Member States to work with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Security Council-mandated Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate to develop their capabilities to counter terrorism and to prevent violent extremism.

Secondly, the United Kingdom recognizes that, when crises become protracted, refugees who have no choice but to flee their homes cannot return. It is therefore vital that education and employment opportunities and support be available to displaced people and to the communities that host them. We are proud to give 0.7 per cent of our gross national income to development. Over half of all the spending of the Department for International Development is to fragile States and regions. In addition, we have helped to secure new World Bank funding for countries that host refugees. At the London conference on Syria in 2016, the United Kingdom pioneered, and secured agreement for, historic compacts between Governments of the

region and the international community to deliver education, create jobs and provide opportunities for refugees and local people.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom is stepping up its efforts to combat the criminal networks that profit from modern slavery: for instance, we are developing an ambitious programme in Nigeria, from where so many migrants across the Mediterranean flow. We all have a role to play to rid the world of this terrible scourge. Let us all invest in livelihoods and development in source countries, and let us all work with border authorities and intelligence agencies to tackle human trafficking and smuggling networks.

In conclusion, our ultimate goal is a well-governed, stable region where human rights are respected. That will ensure we have a stronger platform to fight international terrorism, to end modern slavery and to achieve safe and well-managed migration, bringing value to the destination country and country of origin while also ensuring the safety of those travelling. Given the scale of the challenges ahead, we owe it to all involved to work together and address all of those issues simultaneously.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, once again presiding over the Security Council. The security challenges in the Mediterranean have many dimensions, as they do not negatively affect only countries in the region but also have severe implications for global peace and security. It is therefore timely and necessary to think collectively about how best to tackle these threats. I thank you again, Mr. Minister, for bringing such an important issue to the attention of the Security Council. We also thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing.

Today's discussion can be seen as continuation of our deliberations yesterday (see S/PV.8104) on the situation in Libya. We believe that the country remains an important element for the stability of neighbouring States, North Africa and the Sahel. It is therefore even more regrettable that the current crisis in Libya shows no signs of abating. People live under a constant threat of death or injury from fighting among various armed groups. Hundreds have been killed or tortured. And thousands have been displaced. The humanitarian and economic situation continues to deteriorate rapidly. More and more Libyans require international assistance. The Libyan crisis has opened up a wide range of opportunities to exploit the security

and institutional vacuum. It has enabled local terrorist groups and criminal networks to gain ideological influence and military strength not only in Libya, but in the wider region.

It should be mentioned that the terrorist threat is not something new to the countries of the South-East Mediterranean and the neighbouring Sahel. Major contingents of foreign terrorist fighters who joined the ranks of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Jabhat Al-Nusra, Al-Qaida and their affiliates in Iraq and Syria originated from those particular regions. Now, in view of the recent significant setbacks and loss of territory by respective terrorist organizations in the Middle East, countries in North Africa have to face the inflow of both those who are returning and those who are relocating. Their presence will, without a doubt, fuel only sectarianism and increase the complexity and duration of conflicts.

The other side of the problem is the possible abuse of asylum systems by terrorists while huge waves of migrants arrive from conflict zones, seeking shelter. There is a growing concern about the possible creation of sleeper cells in different parts of North Africa and Europe, which has to be duly addressed.

In order to combat potential terrorism outbreaks and its spread to new regions, the international community may need to elaborate additional measures to those set established in resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2322 (2016), which should address terrorists' modus operandi, inter alia, in a number of ways.

First, we should ensure broader criminalization of foreign terrorist fighters and develop bilateral and international exchange of evidence of their crimes, so that terrorists can be apprehended at the earliest stage possible and face justice.

Secondly, we should ensure swift and unimpeded sharing of information between States, especially of terrorist biometric data, and universalize the use of advanced passenger information and INTERPOL databases.

Thirdly, we should establish effective cross-border cooperation between immigration, law-enforcement and judicial authorities.

Fourthly, we should conduct risk assessments and identify the most vulnerable border stretches in order to strengthen respective controls.

And, fifthly, we should further cut off the sources of financing for terrorism, especially combating extortion activities and kidnapping for ransom, as well as disrupting terrorists' cooperation with transnational organized crime groups involved in smuggling and the trafficking in human beings and weapons.

We also believe that, without political or economic opportunities, particularly for youth, there is a risk that the North Africa and sub-Saharan regions will remain impoverished and ungoverned zones where terrorists and criminals will find a safe haven and a suitable environment for illegal trafficking in persons and arms, as well as other unlawful activities.

Syria remains another burning hotbed of tension in the Mediterranean, poisoning the surrounding region and the wider security environment. The uncountable waves of refugees that fled Syria, seeking salvation from the brutal tyranny and inhumane conditions, arrived in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and many European Union States, thereby creating additional risks for the socioeconomic and security situation in those countries.

Six years of the conflict have passed and what do we see? If current trends persist in Syria, there is a chance that one side will claim a military victory and the overall situation will be akin to that of 2011. However, this time it will be compounded by a traumatized society affected by years of war and a deepening sectarian divide, with neither national reconciliation nor the root causes of the crisis having been addressed. Under such circumstances, any victory over the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) in Syria will provide only temporary relief, with a door remaining open for a new ISIS-like crisis to emerge. Therefore, we continue to believe that there should be a longer-term blueprint for Syria, one that is firmly based on a commitment to a negotiated political settlement and a clear understanding of what will be done next. In the absence of such a blueprint, the situation in the country will continue to pose a long-term risk for the entire Mediterranean region.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that, if we want to achieve sustainable peace and stability in the Mediterranean, more investments have to be made in the socioeconomic development of the countries in need. Without functioning Government structures, the provision of most essential social services, working law enforcement and judicial organs, and the active State

support for local businesses and trade initiatives, the vulnerable communities in conflict-affected countries will remain an easy target for terrorists and criminals. Therefore, initiatives to fight terrorism, bring about economic development and ensure respect for human rights — including the active promotion and protection of the rights of women and children — must go hand in hand and complement each other.

Mr. Llorenty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a true honour to see you, Mr. President, presiding over this meeting. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing, and we take this opportunity to once again commend the way in which Italy is conducting its presidency of the Security Council this month.

The challenges affecting security in the Mediterranean have root causes in the conflicts currently taking place in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the collateral effect that has been generated in the Sahel region. That in turn has translated into the difficulty of States embroiled in internal conflicts to guarantee the security of their own citizens and establish effective measures to strengthen their internal order.

Regrettably, one of the dimensions of this crisis, as we have heard during this meeting, is reflected in the alarming number of migrants and refugees who have died in the Mediterranean Sea — amounting to nearly 3,000 fatalities in 2017 alone. That is a figure that, according to the report of 13 November of the International Organization for Migration, represents more than half of the worldwide fatalities linked to migrants and people seeking refuge. Furthermore, the trafficking in migrants and refugees, subjecting them to slavery, their degrading treatment and the many cases of sexual exploitation, are other examples of the serious effects of this crisis, evidencing the existence and interconnections of terrorist organizations and networks of transnational criminal organizations. Such groups take advantage of the fragile security and control bodies of the States affected by internal conflicts and exploit people's need to safeguard their lives and their families' lives by fleeing the conflicts in their places of origin. That generates resources and finances for the criminal organizations and exacerbates the crisis in the region.

In that context, we appreciate the significant efforts made by the agencies of the United Nations

and the various international cooperation bodies to alleviate the situation of the migrants and refugees who seek to escape conflicts by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. We are also grateful for the State and regional efforts that are being implemented in compliance with resolutions 2240 (2015), 2312 (2016) and 2380 (2017) to combat the crime of trafficking in persons, mainly off the Libyan coast.

We call on all States and the international community to make the greatest possible efforts to prevent and put an end to the proliferation of human trafficking networks operating in the Mediterranean Sea by developing and strengthening the institutional capacities of the countries of transit and origin of those victims. In that regard, Bolivia proposed in June, during the World Peoples' Conference, the concept of "universal citizenship", with the aim of reducing the barriers that prevent refugees from escaping war, armed conflicts or human trafficking. We believe that that proposal constitutes a useful tool to deal with the crisis that is currently occupying the attention of the international community.

The issue of security in North Africa is an important element to take into account when analysing the situation in the Mediterranean according to what was reported on Friday, 10 November in the joint meeting of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005), concerning the Sudan, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan. The reports mentioned the presence of foreign fighters and mercenaries operating in the region who are moving without much difficulty between the countries that are embroiled in internal conflicts and are actively involved in taking up arms and undermining all efforts to achieve a political and peaceful solution to those conflicts.

An example of the related effects of the crises in the region was reflected in the final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) submitted in 2015, which established that weapons from Libya considerably strengthened the military capacity of the terrorist groups that operate in the Sahel subregion and are currently used to perpetrate attacks against the national security forces, as well as civilians and members of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in the field.

It is evident that Government vacuums, the weakening of order and security forces and the absence of border controls have been, and continue to be, elements that allow the proliferation of terrorist groups and irregular combatants, who find the spaces to commit acts of destabilization, in addition to perpetrating crimes and violations of human rights, which may constitute crimes against humanity.

Finally, we believe that those weaknesses and challenges can be addressed if the parties to the various conflicts commit to engage in sustained dialogue to resolve their differences, opting to cease hostilities and, above all, seeking to strengthen the organic structures of the security forces, generating confidence in State institutions and reinforcing the presence and control of States on their borders. In that regard, the efforts of the Council and the international community should focus on paving the way to promote and strengthen peaceful means of conflict resolution. To that end, we believe that the role of the various missions of the United Nations established on the ground to facilitate that work is fundamental.

We reiterate that, to a large extent, the challenges that today affect security in the Mediterranean are the direct and concrete result of the application of regime-change policies, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of other States, which does nothing more than lead to millions of victims, displaced persons and fatalities.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): To begin, I would like to thank the President — His Excellency Mr. Angelino Alfano — for convening this meeting on such an important topic. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing.

The Mediterranean region, which is adjacent to three continents, has historically enjoyed great cultural diversity as the birthplace and crossroads of many civilizations. At the same time, its location makes it particularly vulnerable to the spillover effects of conflict. Today the Mediterranean region is experiencing various challenges in addition to conflict, including climate change, famine, terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, and an unprecedented volume of migration. Those challenges are complex, intertwined threats to peace and security in the region that are exacerbating or prolonging existing conflicts. Against that backdrop, we would like to share a few

perspectives on how to more effectively address those complex, interlinked threats to peace and security in the Mediterranean.

First, we need to grapple with complex, multifactoral challenges to international peace and security through a more comprehensive and integrated approach. In particular, we would like to emphasize the perspective of the peace and security, development and humanitarian nexus. It is clear that complex driving factors to conflict cannot be dealt with from a fragmented perspective. In that regard, it is important to implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which addresses the multidimensional and interlinked challenges facing the Sahel region. Those challenges are among the major factors underlying the surging movement of people through the Mediterranean.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's leadership to strengthen the United Nations work in the Sahel by establishing a steering committee for the Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Japan has been a strong supporter of flagship projects in that regard. We have provided support for border control, as well as for countermeasures against the radicalization of youth and activities to raise awareness of civic rights. Those assistance projects aim to strengthen border control capacity and prevent young people from turning to violent extremism, and thereby stabilize the region.

Secondly, efforts to sustain peace in the region cannot succeed without the States' ownership. In that regard, we would like to commend the ongoing political process in Libya, which is being led by the Libyan people themselves, and express our ongoing support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his role to facilitate that process. The Council should continue to robustly support efforts such as the Libyan political process, conducted with the ownership of the affected countries themselves.

In addition, the role played by regional organizations around the Mediterranean — which include the League of Arab States, the European Union and the African Union — cannot be overemphasized. We believe that the strengthened partnership and better coordination between the United Nations, the Security Council and regional organizations are essential to comprehensively address complex, regional challenges.

Thirdly, we believe that the human security approach could serve as a useful tool in dealing with the complex, interlinked threats to peace and security

in the region. Human security seeks to protect and empower every individual; it necessarily addresses multiple challenges at once, including those that are most destabilizing to the Mediterranean region, such as food and water insecurity, migration, internally displaced persons and health care.

I would like to conclude by thanking once again the presidency of Italy for organizing this holistic and thematic meeting of the Security Council. It is important for the Council to seek better ways to address today's complex, multifactoral challenges to international peace and security. During our presidency of the Council next month, we would like to continue relevant discussions, building upon today's discussions.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President — Foreign Minister Alfano — for presiding over this important discussion. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing this afternoon.

Several members have already spoken about many of the specific challenges countries around the Mediterranean face. Terrorism, illicit smuggling, migration and development are all urgent issues that deserve our full attention. But let us step back for a moment. When we look at the Mediterranean, we can see that many of those challenges originate in conflicts in two places, that is, Syria and Libya. Both of those conflicts began when ordinary people demanded respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Attempts by the Al-Assad and Al-Qadhafi regimes to suppress those demands by force created much of the instability we are now grappling with today. The lesson is simple: the question of security in the Mediterranean is really a question of human dignity. When we support respect for human dignity and the rule of law, we can achieve lasting stability. However, ignoring such demands for human rights can sow the seeds of future conflict.

In Syria, Al-Assad's brutality gave the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and Al-Qaida a window of opportunity. As the Al-Assad regime rounded up, tortured and executed thousands of people, ISIS and Al-Qaida's violent ideology gained new traction. As Al-Assad's regime literally starved its people and bombed hospitals and schools, the migration exodus began. As long as the Al-Assad regime remains in power, the potential for instability and extremism will remain.

In Libya, decades of misrule by Al-Qadhafi left the country with extremely weak institutions. When the revolution came, those institutions crumbled. Libya became a place where ISIS was able to set up an outpost and where illegal activity, such as trafficking in people and arms, could thrive as well. As with Syria, the Libyan people continue to pay a steep price. It is now time for all Libyans to support and engage constructively in the political process facilitated by the United Nations to achieve national reconciliation, end the conflict and build unified national governance and security institutions.

Today we are facing the consequences of those decades of tyranny. Oppression at home in Syria and Libya created threats to international peace and security. The answer to security challenges in the Mediterranean must therefore not be a misguided attempt to recreate failed political structures of the past; instead, we have to do better. All of us in the Council must work, in word and in deed, to support something different. We need political solutions to conflicts in Libya and Syria that empower people and that create strong representative institutions over the long run. That goal has to be what guides us in responding to the immediate challenges of the present. Of course, there is no shortage of immediate threats to confront. None is more pressing than defeating ISIS and Al-Qaida.

The United States continues to lead, with important successes against ISIS in Syria. But we have to stay vigilant. Fighters on the run in Syria threaten to slip across borders as they try to return home or go to third countries. All Member States will need to increase their defences against foreign terrorist fighters, in line with the terms of resolution 2178 (2014). In Libya, we partnered with the Government of National Accord and its aligned forces as they expelled ISIS from Sirte, which was once the principal stronghold of ISIS outside Iraq and Syria. Yesterday, we heard from Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on his mediation efforts (see S/PV.8104). The international community must help Special Representative Salamé and the Libyan parties advance the country's political process, which is the only viable way to stabilize Libya and unify national security forces against the real threat, that is, ISIS. Armed civil conflict among Libyans will only destabilize the country and play into ISIS's hands.

Of course, civilians face dire risks every day from the fighting in Syria and Libya, too. Just this week,

air strikes reportedly killed more than 50 civilians in a market in northern Syria. These were the latest incidents in the regime's long track record of flagrant disregard for the lives and welfare of the Syrian people. The Al-Assad regime's barbaric acts continue to play right into the hands of terrorist groups and undermine stability across the region.

We are also seeing new risks for civilians in Libya. Just a few weeks ago, more than a dozen people were killed and many more injured in an air strike in the city of Derna, and its people desperately need immediate and unhindered humanitarian access. Last month 36 bodies were found in a mass grave not far from Benghazi. The United States strongly condemns those incidents. As Mr. Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, stated yesterday (see S/PV.8104), there are also concerns that a number of the fighters who died last week in the Warshefana area, in western Libya, were killed in a manner that violates international law. Those responsible must now be held accountable in order to prevent such atrocities from happening in the future, and all sides must avoid further escalation.

Finally, the United States agrees with many others in the Council about the importance of combating trafficking in persons and illicit smuggling. Transnational criminal organizations are responsible for so much of that illegal activity, and they are preying on the defenceless. We continue to hear sickening reports from victims inside Libya, including migrants who have been raped, sold into prostitution or subjected to forced labour. It is no surprise that those same criminal gangs have no concern for the lives of migrants at sea, where more than 2,900 people have died this year in the Mediterranean alone.

We recognize the important work of the European Union's Operation Sophia, led by Italy, in combating smuggling and rescuing thousands of lives at sea, but the criminals are branching out, including through the illegal smuggling of Libyan oil and petroleum products. That is why it was important that the Council designated for sanctions two ships involved in the illegal petroleum trade earlier this year, and we should use all the tools we have to disrupt those criminal networks. But we all have to remember where so many of the challenges began. They began with regimes that did not respect the dignity and rights of their peoples. Stability in the Mediterranean is not just about addressing all of the

short-term challenges around us; it is about learning from the recent past. It is about investing in real institutions that protect people's rights. It is about speaking up as a Security Council when we see Governments moving in the wrong direction. It is about remembering that when people are oppressed, the consequences go far beyond the borders of any one country, and that is what we must act on.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Italian delegation for taking the initiative to convene today's meeting. In our view, its format makes it possible to consider the challenges and threats to global peace and security from a new perspective, including through the prism of the situation in the Mediterranean region. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative report on the subject.

The Mediterranean region has clearly encountered a slew of problems spawned by crisis situations in countries around it as well as beyond it. The terrorist threat continues to grow and the scale and scope of transnational organized crime is continually expanding, owing in part to its close ties to terrorist activity. The waves of migrants attempting to leave their homes to seek a better future in a new homeland are not diminishing. However, it would be wrong to imply that such worrying trends are linked exclusively to the region around the Mediterranean Sea. Their negative impact is being felt around the world. Our planet has become so interdependent that a crisis in one spot on the globe can have a chain reaction far beyond its borders. Regrettably, in this era of globalization, we cannot defend ourselves from this either by building walls or deploying military forces. In this situation, there is only one possible way for the international community to respond to these threats. We must unite our efforts, based on cooperation through honest partnerships, with the aim of resolving the situations of conflict in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel-Saharan region — which have become catalysts for the wave of destabilization in the Mediterranean — as well as a factor of waging an uncompromising fight against the threat of terrorism. We have long called for this.

One of the stated aims of today's briefing is to consider the root causes of the multifaceted threats to security in the Mediterranean. We believe that, overall, this approach is worth supporting. From the very beginning of the so-called Arab spring, which triggered a series of destructive processes in the Middle

East and North Africa, Russia has repeatedly suggested that the Security Council should conduct a substantive analysis of what occurred and draw lessons from it for the future. However, few have made use of that sad but valuable experience. Meanwhile, the growing instability in the region has been skilfully exploited by extremists and terrorist groups. Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, the African cells of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and others have hastened to fill the power vacuum that external forces helped to create.

We share the concerns about the unprecedented harm they continue to do to cultural heritage sites, using profits from their trade in historically and culturally valuable objects to finance terrorism's requirements. We expect that this problem, and the issue of human trafficking, will be considered in more detail in separate Security Council meetings this month.

Just yesterday we discussed the situation in Libya (see S/PV.8104), where the lack of stability is a key piece in the region's jigsaw puzzle of security. We heard worrying assessments of the political situation, and many expressed their concerns about the slow implementation of Special Representative Salame's action plan. Yet almost no one mentioned the original causes of the crisis in Libya. The representative of Bolivia alone reminded us — and we thank him for it — that they are to be found in the military intervention that the NATO countries undertook in 2011 in order to change a regime that they did not like, in violation of international law. The result was that the radical groups that had been used not long before to oust Mr. Al-Qadhafi gained access to arsenals, a danger that had warned about well in advance. That in turn foreordained the further evolution of the situation far beyond the borders of Libya, primarily in the Sahel-Saharan region and the Mediterranean.

It would be wrong to delude ourselves that terrorists can be used for achieving political goals such as effecting regime change in Tripoli, Damascus or anywhere else, and then to hope that they will sign up for deradicalization classes and assimilate peacefully into civil society. They will accept financial, military and other assistance, of course, but they will turn their backs on their sponsors as soon as they consider it necessary. We have already seen that with Al-Qaida in Afghanistan, and we will see it again. It is simply wrong to close one's eyes to manifestations of radicalization in such situations, let alone condone them.

We do not share the belief that human rights violations are the primary cause of conflict and that action in support of human rights is the key to preventing conflict. Indeed, practice has shown that the reverse is true. Only resolving conflicts can lead to improvements in human rights situations. Reckless intervention, including under the banner of protecting human rights, can lead to a collapse of State authority, humanitarian disasters, civil wars and surges in terrorism, and thereby produce massive flows of forcibly displaced people. We believe that States that are actively involved in such interventions should acknowledge that it is they who have primary responsibility for assisting the refugees and internally displaced persons who have fallen victim to their actions.

We share the concerns about the deaths of refugees and migrants who choose dangerous paths in their quest for a better life, fleeing terrorist threats, persecution, conflict, instability and poverty. It is important to understand that the long-term solution to the problem lies in finding political settlements in the refugees' countries of origin. Millions of people, and entire nations, are in need of peace, stability and confidence in the future. The ultimately determining way to significantly reduce the refugee problem is to establish lasting peace in Syria, Libya and other countries in the grip of conflict.

It is essential to comprehensively combat criminal organizations that are smuggling people, improve and strengthen mechanisms to manage migration processes and increase the international community's cooperation on this issue. We must also expand socioeconomic development assistance to countries of origin, and it is as important as ever to combat displays of racism and xenophobia towards refugees and migrants.

The obvious fact remains that in order to ensure security, development and stability in a region, it is essential to strengthen State institutions, provide for systemic economic and social development and universal respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as taking measures to combat terrorism. It will be essential to improve the performance of existing mechanisms. For example, the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel has not yet been used to its full potential. If the response to the threats in the Mediterranean is not a truly collective one, waves of instability will continue to spread from crisis areas. It is essential to stop double-dealing and courting radicals. We are ready to cooperate openly with all of our partners

in the interests of preventing the destructive evolution of events in the Mediterranean region. Russia's policy is transparent. We have no hidden agenda.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As we were yesterday, the Senegalese delegation is pleased to see you presiding over today's debate on security challenges in the Mediterranean, Mr. President.

For a change, I will begin by reading out a press statement issued today by the Government of Senegal.

"The Government of the Republic of Senegal expresses its profound indignation upon learning of the sale on Libyan territory of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa. The Government of the Republic of Senegal vigorously denounces and condemns in the strongest terms such human trafficking, which is a serious outrage to the conscience of humankind. Senegal urges the competent Libyan authorities, as well as the African Union and the United Nations, to launch a prompt investigation into this practice of a different era in order to do everything possible to put an end to it."

As a natural link between Africa, Europe and Asia, the Mediterranean basin has over the years become a place where complex internal and external factors — human, cultural, socioeconomic and recently, owing to climate change, environmental — are intertwined. The Mediterranean is also a hotbed of passions and tensions that have shaped diverse itineraries and trajectories and directions for coastal countries and peoples.

The threats to the stability of the Mediterranean region are therefore numerous and, to varying degrees, present in all its countries, with roots that extend as far as the Sahel-Saharan belt. In particular, North Africa is directly affected, especially since the upheavals in the Arab world that have destabilized Libya, among other countries. The consequences of the disruption of Libya are being felt today throughout the Sahel and well beyond, including, of course, the Mediterranean region, thanks to the double effect of the spillover of weapons to the Sahel, which is pushing migrants towards Europe.

The Sahel region, which is feeling the full impact of the consequences of the situation in Libya, is now plagued by insecurity, trafficking of all kinds, terrorism and violent extremism, whose consequences include attacks, kidnappings and summary executions of unprecedented violence, perpetrated by armed groups — mainly criminal, but also terrorist — that

continue to spread terror within communities. We know that these groups take advantage of loopholes in international legal systems and flaws in national and international financial systems to raise funds, including through the illicit sale of oil, kidnappings for ransoms, human and arms trafficking, looting, the sale of cultural property and even of protected animal and plant species. For now, violent extremism seems to be taking permanent root in the Sahel and throughout the Mediterranean region.

If we are to take up the challenge of insecurity in the Sahel and the Mediterranean, we believe we must take a holistic approach that will bring together the security, humanitarian, development and environmental aspects, since it is clear that only a comprehensive response and united efforts will enable us to overcome the various threats that continue to undermine the security and stability of the Mediterranean and the Sahel. In that connection, the United Nations must continue to play its central role in supporting ongoing regional efforts in both regions.

With regard to Libya, the delegation of Senegal would like to insist, as it did at yesterday's briefing in this Chamber (see S/PV.8104), on the importance of addressing the issue within the overall framework of the search for a political solution to the Libyan crisis through inclusive dialogue, as part of a Libyan-led process, through the good offices of the United Nations, particularly Mr. Salame. We firmly believe that the restoration of peace and stability in Libya is essential to all neighbouring countries and regions, including in the Mediterranean region.

In general, the solutions to the challenges facing most of the States of the Mediterranean could be summarized as follows. We must prioritize political approaches in the search for solutions to crises; encourage and promote better subregional and cross-regional cooperation and integration; fight together against terrorist movements, organized transnational criminal networks and violent extremism; and reduce the fragility of States and their economies by mitigating the effects of climate change.

Syria, a country in the Mediterranean basin that is enduring a deep political crisis, is undoubtedly an amalgam of these various challenges, with the presence of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State, foreign terrorist fighters, mass movements of displaced persons and refugees not only to neighbouring countries but

also to Europe, as well as the looting and trafficking of cultural property. With the decline of the Islamic State, now on the defensive in Syria and in Iraq thanks to the efforts of various stakeholders, my delegation reaffirms its belief in the urgent need for a political solution to the Syrian dispute on the basis of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and resolution 2254 (2015), with a view to addressing the humanitarian challenges and ensuring accountability for the multiple alleged crimes, including the use of weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons.

My delegation has not forgotten the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is as old as the Organization itself, and calls on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to redouble its efforts so that, like the Israelis, who enjoy a democratic and prosperous State, the Palestinians can fulfil their legitimate aspirations to obtaining a sovereign and viable State within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Equally concerning is the situation in Lebanon, where the resignation of the Prime Minister is generating institutional instability.

We must also acknowledge that the lack of cooperation and shared vision among the various regions affected by the global security situation in the Mediterranean basin complicates the search for solutions. With regard to the Mediterranean and as way forward, the Senegalese delegation proposes reflecting on the outcome document (General Assembly resolution 71/312), entitled "Our ocean, our future: call for action", which, last July, authorized the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by joining others in thanking the Italian presidency for organizing this timely briefing on the security challenges in the Mediterranean region. I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and sharing his thoughts on how to address such pressing challenges.

In this briefing, although there have been references to issues that do not belong here, we prefer to stick to matters that are relevant to the topic at hand. In our view, attempts to exercise a monopoly on any area of discussion does not contribute to peace. Ethiopia has always been committed to a win-win outcome in all engagements with its partners.

Armed conflicts in the Mediterranean region continue to create space for terrorist organizations and violent extremist groups within which to operate. They have also created favourable conditions for organized criminal groups engaged in trafficking in persons and smuggling. Those trends have caused unspeakable suffering for civilian populations, thereby resulting in forced displacement in the Sahel, Middle East and North Africa, as well as the large-scale secondary movement of people using the Mediterranean route. The large-scale secondary movement coupled with the entrenchment of organized transnational criminal groups continues to pose serious challenges to maintaining peace and security in the Mediterranean region, particularly in front-line countries, such as Italy and Greece.

Restrictions on mobility are also among the challenges facing the Mediterranean region, particularly in the light of increased suffering faced by people on the move, including tragic deaths, extortion, slavery and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as other serious human rights abuses at the hands of terrorist groups and trafficking and smuggling networks. In our view, those serious challenges require a comprehensive and coordinated approach that could be based on the following three pillars.

First, it is vital to intensify all efforts to address the root causes of conflicts, as well as respond to challenges that might have resulted from the vacuum caused by them, such as transnational organized crimes, terrorism and violent extremism. The role of the Security Council in resolving the root causes of conflict and responding to challenges posed by terrorists and violent extremist groups to the maintenance of peace and security and countries affected by armed conflict continues to be critical. In that regard, the Council should continue to work towards finding a political solution to conflicts, and use all the available tools at its disposal to that end. Enhanced cooperation and coordination with the African Union and subregional organizations would also complement the Security Council's efforts in that area. Our united efforts in addressing the root causes of conflict will enable us to establish favourable conditions for the sustainable, voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees to their countries of origin in safety, and prevent further secondary movements to Europe.

Secondly, in countries emerging from conflict or in post-conflict situations, justice and security institutions struggle to manage the wider socioeconomic and

political challenges inherent to recovery processes. It is important to redouble our efforts in supporting countries emerging from conflicts in the Sahel, particularly with regard to their institutions and efforts to sustain peace and development.

Thirdly, serious protection challenges concerning the humanitarian situation caused by armed conflicts and terrorism in north-eastern Nigeria, Libya, Syria and Mali, among others, and the lack of durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons from those countries continue to be the primary cause of secondary movement via the Mediterranean. For instance, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has indicated that refugees and migrants continued to risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean sea during the first half of 2017. Although I commend the generosity of countries of the Mediterranean region that continue to open their borders to refugees, I would like to underscore the importance of facilitating regular, safe, accessible and orderly mobility, particularly through expanded resettlement opportunities, and visitor, family reunification, work, resident and student visas, as well as other temporary protection schemes. I would also like to re-emphasize the need to redouble our support for refugees response plans in first countries of asylum to respond to their protection needs.

In conclusion, I would like to end my statement by affirming our commitment to working in a coordinated manner with all relevant actors to address the root causes of the peace and security challenges in the Mediterranean region, while encouraging countries in and beyond the region to continue their generosity directed towards refugees seeking international protection.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank the Italian presidency and you, Mr. Minister, for convening this meeting and highlighting the security challenges that the Mediterranean faces today. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his comprehensive briefing.

The security environment in the Mediterranean region has indeed changed dramatically in recent years. The conflicts, threats and unprecedented humanitarian crises in North and West Africa, the Middle East and the Sahel have deeply impacted stability in Europe as a result of contemporary security challenges. Those can be categorized as unconventional terrorism, irregular migration and organized crime involving arms, drugs

and trafficking in persons, all of which generate an atmosphere of fear, distrust and intense hostilities. They, in turn, further negatively affect the social and political structure of European society and regional stability, as well as international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned about the growing migration flow through the Mediterranean to Europe, primarily through Libya, which has become the largest illegal channel for the transit of migrants and refugees. Instability, a fragile and volatile security situation, and a lack of unity within Libya create a breeding ground in which human traffickers are able to actively operate in the country. Hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees in Libya suffer abuses and detention in inhuman conditions.

Kazakhstan therefore welcomed the adoption of resolution 2380(2017) on 5 October, extending for another year the mandate of the European Union (EU) military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean and conferring upon it the charge of combating smuggling and human trafficking on the high seas off the coast of Libya. More importantly, my delegation also urges for the immediate and strict implementation by all Member States of its various provisions.

We commend the outcome of the annual Mediterranean Conference of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe, held in Palermo last month under the Italian chairmanship of the OSCE-Mediterranean Contact Group, which focused on the large movements of migrants and refugees across the Mediterranean. The results of this significant meeting have a direct bearing on the necessary steps that need to be taken.

Tackling the challenges of migration is of common interest to all European States and the rest of the world. It is not only a humanitarian issue, but also a political and a security problem, which could be solved through close partnership among the United Nations and the EU, NATO, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as countries of origin and transit. The rights of refugees and migrants must be protected, including through their active engagement in the social life of their host countries and through their integration within European society, so that people build a future in their new home. This comprehensive development response helps drive long-term economic growth, as well as jobs and opportunities for potential economic migrants.

The role of the EU remains vital to support affected countries by implementing the mandates of the EU Trust Fund, the Joint Communication on the Central Mediterranean route, and the Malta Declaration. However, global challenges can only be effectively addressed by the involvement of the international community as a whole, working together in a balanced and human rights-compliant way. The key principle of such global support is balancing non-interference in the internal affairs of States with the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building for strengthening State institutions.

Fragile Member States must be helped to protect their citizens through bilateral and multilateral support for the rule of law, good governance and security-sector reform, and by promoting human rights and investing in development, so as to create political, economic and social stability. Understanding the root causes of displacement, together with strengthening the security-development nexus, is necessary for long-term development, for which a regional approach consistent with the "One UN" strategy would be most effective. Such an approach cannot bear fruit without investing in poverty reduction, education, job creation and basic services.

Kazakhstan is strongly committed to reaching concrete outcomes on the issue of migrants and refugees, working together with the United Nations as well as other Member States, based on the fundamental principles of human dignity, justice and freedom. We firmly believe that through our joint efforts we can make the Mediterranean a region of new opportunities and an oasis of global prosperity and stability.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Italy's initiative in holding a public meeting on the security challenges in the Mediterranean. We welcome Foreign Minister Alfano's presence in the Chamber today and thank him for presiding over today's meeting. The statement by Secretary-General Guterres has provided excellent context for our discussion, for which China is grateful.

The Mediterranean is a region where Asia, Africa and Europe meet. In recent years, the situation in Libya, Syria and the Sahel region has been deteriorating. The hotspot issues have continuously been getting worse. Terrorist forces have been rampant and spreading. The problem of the illegal transfer of arms is serious. The regional situation is volatile and unstable, seriously

affecting the development of countries of the region and their peoples' lives. Many countries are faced with multiple challenges, such as unbalanced development, intercommunal conflict, massive flows of refugees and migrants, and serious cross-border organized crimes, *inter alia*.

The fates of the countries and peoples in the Mediterranean are interwoven, and the spillover impacts of the regional situation on the surrounding larger region cannot be underestimated. Expediently improving the situation in the region and finding a way to achieve regional stability, prevent new conflicts and build sustainable peace and development will require the joint efforts of the international community. China would like to emphasize the following points.

First, regional hotspot issues should be the focus, and the process of political settlement should be accelerated. Libya's neighbouring countries, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union should step up their efforts to promote peace talks in support of the action plans and initiatives on the political settlement of the Libyan issue, so as to achieve reconciliation, stability and development in Libya at an early date. The international community should remain united and push the Syrian parties to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties as soon as possible through the Geneva peace talks. Bearing in mind the specific context in the Sahel region, the international community should take comprehensive measures to help cool down the hotspot issues in a relevant way and achieve overall peace and stability in that region. The international community should not neglect the long-standing Palestinian issue. Unless we resolve that issue at the root of the Middle East question, it will be difficult to truly achieve regional stability.

Secondly, we should strengthen international and regional efforts, as well as coordination and cooperation with the countries concerned, and jointly meet our security challenges. The United Nations has a central role to play in international affairs in terms of coordinating efforts in preventive diplomacy, development assistance, good offices in mediation and post-conflict reconstruction. Regional organizations should also play a constructive role, giving greater assistance to countries of the region in conflict resolution and development, enhancing capacity-building and achieving regional stability, while paying attention in this process to safeguarding the sovereignty of the countries concerned, respecting their views

and focusing on their needs. At the same time, the coordination of country and regional strategies should be strengthened to encourage synergies.

Thirdly, we should resolutely fight terrorism and appropriately address the refugee and migrant issue. Terrorism is the public enemy of all humankind. It seriously undermines the security and stability of the region. The international community should unite in its fight against terrorism and comprehensively use the various means available to it to strengthen border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Mediterranean region and adjacent regions, cut off the financing of terrorists and their supply of arms, halt the spread of terrorist ideologies and step up the efforts aimed at preventing the spillover and return of foreign terrorist fighters.

In dealing with the issue of refugees and migrants, it is necessary to strengthen support for countries receiving refugees, eliminate xenophobia and discrimination against them, and address the root causes of social instability and development imbalance. By supporting the countries of origin and transit, we can create conditions for the return of refugees and promote the sustainable development in the countries of origin. China appreciates the efforts of Italy, Lebanon and Jordan and others in their response to the refugee crisis in the region.

Fourthly, we should promote inclusive, balanced development that benefits everyone, respecting the diversity of civilizations and fostering our awareness of the community or a common destiny. Conflicts, war, terrorism and refugee and migrant crises can all find their roots in poverty and backwardness. Development is fundamental to resolving these global issues. We should seek open, inclusive, innovative and mutually beneficial development outlook for the Mediterranean region, which could help developing countries implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, enhance their capabilities in terms of poverty alleviation — or even elimination — and homegrown development, achieving shared progress and promoting lasting peace.

We should insist on upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, following the new security concept, which is common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable in nature, in a joint effort to build a regional security network. We should construct a partnership that is based dialogue

instead of confrontation or partnership instead of alignment, strengthen dialogue among civilizations and religions, abandon zero-sum thinking, adhere to the general direction of peaceful settlement of disputes, and resolve differences through political means.

The Mediterranean is a strategically important region, rich in natural resources, with a unique cultural background and great potential for development. China is committed to according continued attention to the situation in the Mediterranean region, along with countries of the region and the international community. The Mediterranean region is an important link along the Belt and Road, based on the idea of jointly discussing, building and sharing. In recent years, China has proposed and actively promoted joint implementation of the the Belt and Road Initiative. That proposal has enjoyed a positive response from the international community, including the Mediterranean region. China and the countries of the region have conducted in-depth and results-oriented cooperation on the strengthening of connectivity and the development of infrastructure, and positive progress has been achieved. China will continue to contribute to the realization of stability, security and lasting development in the Mediterranean region and is committed to building the community of a common destiny.

Mr. Rosselli Frieri (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the delegation of Italy for bringing this topic for consideration at this meeting, and I would like to thank you personally, Mr. President, for presiding over this meeting. We would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his presence and participation internationaln today's meeting.

The Mediterranean region faces a series of closely linked challenges that are fuelled by the serious crises in Libya, Syria and the Sahel region; the global threat of terrorism and violent extremism, trafficking in persons, international organized crime, the absence of State authority and the effects of climate change, among other factors. These challenges must be addressed with a holistic perspective that considers needs related to security, cooperation, development, human rights and humanitarian law. The causes of extreme poverty, hunger, unemployment and sectarian and religious tensions that can threaten regional stability must be addressed.

Many of these factors have led to massive displacement in recent years of the inhabitants of

sub-Saharan Africa in search of a better future. In seeking this future, and before they can cross the Mediterranean in an attempt that often costs them their lives, they become victims of international mafias and criminal groups that exploit their desperate situation and subject them to absolutely inhuman and degrading treatment. Allow me to recall that the displacement of persons does not in itself constitute a threat to international peace and security. As we prepare to begin negotiations on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, Uruguay wishes to stress the principle of the non-criminalization of irregular migration and recall that the need to promote and protect human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all should be a cornerstone in addressing this topic.

We remain concerned about the desperate situation of migrants who use Libya as a country of transit to reach Europe. At the same time, this situation puts a lot of pressure on host countries, which by making enormous economic and social efforts to welcome them, are facing difficulties arising from this new reality. Hundreds of thousand sub-Saharan migrants are in Libya right now, waiting for a chance to cross the Mediterranean and they are being subjected to abuse and serious violations of their human rights. In the past few hours, once again, media outlets have reported the sale of slaves in Libya. This is an aberration and must be unanimously condemned by all present in this Chamber. This cannot and should not be tolerated. Only the political and institutional stabilization of Libya will make it possible to significantly counter this phenomenon. With that in mind, we welcome the new action plan and the United Nations road map for Libya, which hope will make it possible to revive a political negotiation process facilitated and lead by the United Nations.

Just two years ago, the world witnessed the greatest refugee and migrant crisis since the Second World War, when hundreds of thousands of Syrians fled the country to escape the worsening conflict, the escalation of violence and the expansion of terrorism. We all remember the images of entire families travelling through Europe, trying to cross borders to find a new life away from the horrors of the war in their homeland. While some have succeeded in their quest, thousands of others, many of them children, drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, which has gone from being a cradle of civilizations to a collective grave for innocent lives.

The challenges in the Mediterranean are an result of this cluster of problems that we have just mentioned. Respect and protection for the human individual must always be at the centre of our work in order to ensure development in that region and achieve peace and security in a stable environment.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his edifying briefing and his personal commitment to addressing the problems that have brought us together today. I would also like to thank the Italian presidency for taking the initiative to hold this important discussion on our common challenges in the Mediterranean. This subject is strategically important when it comes to regional and international security and stability. It is also a humanitarian priority — almost 3,000 people have died in the Mediterranean since the beginning of the year.

I would like to begin by underlining the urgency of tackling security challenges in the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean — a crossroads between Europe, Africa and the Middle East — is facing an unprecedented multiplication of regional crises. It is home to multiple humanitarian, security and development challenges, which affect particularly vulnerable populations. It is our responsibility to take collective action against these threats.

The fight against terrorism is the first major challenge and a top priority for France. Increased efforts are needed to address the common challenges posed by terrorism: the return or relocation of foreign terrorist fighters, the use of the Internet by terrorist groups and the financing of terrorism, which will be the focus of an international conference organized in Paris by President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron in April 2018. The links between transnational organized crime and terrorism must also receive our full attention. In both Libya and the Sahel, various trafficking activities carried out by criminal networks are fuelling terrorist groups.

The fight against terrorism also involves continuing to work to protect cultural heritage. Resolution 2347 (2017), adopted in March on the initiative of France and Italy, underscored how the destruction, looting and illicit trafficking in cultural property is contributing to these conflicts. We are looking forward to returning to this topic at the meeting on 30 November.

A second manifestation of the security challenges in the Mediterranean is the migration crisis, which is affecting Europe and leaving millions of people completely destitute. A purely security-oriented approach to the migration issue would be neither desirable nor effective. The migration challenge demands increased European and international cooperation and should encompass the entire migratory route — from the countries of origin to the countries of destination — while respecting the rights of the persons concerned.

That is why our President, in close connection with Italy, has made migration one of France's top priorities. In that regard, I wish to pay tribute to Italy for its considerable efforts to host refugees. On the initiative of President Macron, an international meeting was held in Paris, on 28 August, which led to the adoption of a plan of action on migratory issues in the central Mediterranean, with a particular focus on the countries of origin, Chad and the Niger.

We remain very concerned about the inhuman treatment of migrants who are passing through Libya. We reiterate our appeal to the Libyan authorities to make every effort to ensure that migrants are treated with dignity and respect for their human rights. The EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, which is saving tens of thousands of lives every year and whose mandate was recently renewed, illustrates the European Union's commitment to fighting the smuggling of migrants in the central Mediterranean.

To address these issues over the long term, we must promote a cross-cutting approach, based on cooperation among Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Mediterranean crises will not be resolved without a coherent, long-term political approach that combines security, development and solidarity. Climate change exacerbates development issues in the Mediterranean region and its effects are potential sources of instability and conflict. That was one of the observations made by the Council during its mission to the Lake Chad basin, which I personally found striking.

In the Sahel, France promotes a comprehensive response based on the pillars of security, development and good governance, as well as education and the prevention of violent extremism. In that spirit, we actively support the Group of Five for the Sahel initiative to establish a joint force to lead cross-border operations in order to combat the transnational threat posed by

terrorism and trafficking in States of the region. We work with the other partners of the Sahel Alliance to further mobilize the principal donors to promote development and good governance in the countries of the Sahel. The political track and implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali must progress in parallel. Finally, we will continue to mobilize the international community to support the Joint Force, in line with the ministerial meeting of 30 October 2017 and looking ahead to the Brussels conference. In that regard, we will soon put forward proposals, taking into account both the needs expressed on the ground and the sensitivities around this table.

The crises in the Middle East require political solutions that are inclusive of all populations. That is why France fully supports a negotiated transition in Syria, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). France calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, ahead of the Geneva negotiations at the end of the month. That is the only political process that is likely to lead to a lasting political solution.

In Libya, the solution lies in national reconciliation and the restoration of State authority throughout the territory. That is also the best long-term solution to overcoming terrorism and to responding to the challenges of migration. As we said yesterday before the Council (see S/PV.8104), we fully support the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ghassan Salamé.

In Gaza, the humanitarian crisis, coupled with an environmental crisis, also has political causes. The intra-Palestinian reconciliation process must continue. We commend the efforts of Egypt in that regard. That process must enable the Palestinian Authority to fully exercise its prerogatives in the Gaza Strip, including in the area of security, and to facilitate the lifting of the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. In our view, that intra-Palestinian reconciliation is inseparable from the resumption of the peace process on the basis of the two-State solution.

Finally, the protection of the rights of all, including people belonging to minorities, is critical to preserving pluralism and diversity in the Middle East, which

we strongly support. Together with Jordan, France organized the international Paris conference in September 2015, which resulted in the submission of an action plan in support of victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East. As we recalled this year at the Madrid conference, France is fully committed to the implementation of that plan. It contributed €10 million euros to the emergency fund.

It will be essential to continue the fight impunity for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Following the adoption of resolution 2379 (2017) in September, we welcome the establishment of an investigative team to document the crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq. Strengthening the role of women in particular through their effective participation in political processes, must also be an integral part of the response. France will continue to ensure the protection of children, who remain the first victims of conflicts.

The scale of the challenges seen today calls for the Security Council and the entire international community to play an greater role. Beyond the mobilization of the General Assembly with the negotiation of the agreements on migration and refugees, the increased mobilization of the Council is essential. France continues to be committed to strengthening its cooperation with countries on both shores of the Mediterranean — both European countries and those of the Maghreb, with whom we maintain particular close historical and cultural ties. In that spirit, France supports the economic development of countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, in particular in the context of the Tunisia 2020 initiative.

In conclusion, responding to the multifaceted challenges of the Mediterranean area requires a comprehensive and integrated approach: prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building efforts must be mutually reinforcing in order to be fully effective. Solidarity with countries neighbouring conflict zones which are at the front line of population displacement is also necessary. More than ever, we must tackle the challenges facing the Mediterranean area. We owe this to the people concerned, to ourselves and to the melting pot of culture, civilization and coexistence that the Mediterranean represents.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8107th meeting

Friday, 17 November 2017, 6.15 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cardini	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 6.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/970, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Japan.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): The use of chemical weapons is entirely unacceptable under any circumstances. There is full agreement within the Security Council on this point, and it is shared by the entire international community. We jointly condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which has resulted in the deaths of many civilians. Members of the Security Council also share the view that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), an important Council product of 2015, should continue to work.

Yesterday, however, two draft resolutions — both of which proposed to extend the JIM's mandate for another 12 months — failed to be adopted. Japan has proposed a draft resolution (S/2017/970) to allow for further discussions among Council members to consider the future of the JIM. We hope that the proposed report to be submitted by the Secretary-General on proposals for the structure and methodology of the JIM, reflecting the views of Council members, will help us to find the best way forward.

Chemical-weapons use in Syria continues. Until all perpetrators have been identified, the work of the JIM should continue. The Council is ultimately responsible for ensuring accountability for the use of chemical weapons, and the JIM is vitally important for pursuing that task. Japan hopes that the Council can adopt the draft resolution.

The President: The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

Against:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China

The President (spoke in Spanish): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of one permanent member of the Council.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): In a world in which the Council's time and attention could be productively devoted to 100 different things, Russia is wasting our time. Conflicts are raging. Outlaw States are acquiring nuclear weapons. The human dignity of millions is violated every day. Brutal regimes are using chemical weapons on their own people.

All the members of the Council and their staff have worked for months on preserving and strengthening the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). We have worked knowing that lives were at stake. We have worked knowing that the international chemical weapons non-proliferation regime was also at stake. And all that time — hundreds of hours — has been for nothing.

As we have long suspected, Russia does not now and has never had any intention of making this time productive for the Council and the international community. Russia's veto — its second in 24 hours — shows us that Russia has no interest in finding common ground with the rest of the Council to save the JIM. Russia will not agree to any mechanism that might shine a spotlight on the use of chemical weapons by its ally, the Syrian regime. It is as simple and shameful as that.

Japan's draft resolution (S/2017/970) — a short-term measure to buy us more time to find a way

forward — was a stop-gap measure. But it was our last, best chance to stay united. The adoption of the draft resolution would have shown the world that the Council will always try to overcome our differences, especially when confronted by the most serious threats to peace and security.

In recent weeks, all Council members have professed an interest in credible, impartial investigations of chemical-weapons use in Syria, and all Council members have underscored the need for the JIM to employ high standards and present credible evidence. Japan's draft resolution tried to build on these points of agreement. Russia was one of the voices calling for an independent and impartial JIM. In the draft resolution it offered yesterday (S/2017/968), it called on the Secretary-General to solicit recommendations from Council members to strengthen the JIM. As a sign of their willingness to compromise and their openness to addressing Russia's concerns, the Japanese included in their draft resolution a provision that is virtually identical to the Russian language.

I invite my colleagues to examine the two draft resolutions side by side. The language in the draft resolution just vetoed by our Russian friends was virtually the same as the text in their own resolution, and still they saw fit to waste our time. Russia's actions — today and in recent weeks — have been designed to delay, to distract and ultimately to defeat the effort to secure accountability for chemical weapons attacks in Syria. Russia never invited Council members to provide input on its own draft resolution — a text that yesterday received only four votes in favour. And Russia declined to propose any textual edits to the United States draft. We even incorporated elements of the Russian draft into our own in the hope that they would engage with us. Indeed, from the very beginning, Russia has not negotiated with any of us. Russia has just dictated and demanded. That is not how the Security Council is supposed to work. That is not how the Security Council can work.

I want to extend the sincere thanks of the United States to those Council members that worked so hard — and gave Russia a second, third, fourth and fifth chance — to protect innocent civilians from chemical attacks. It is a credit to them — and a win for the cause of the non-proliferation of chemical weapons — that the draft resolution received such broad support.

There remains overwhelming international support for investigating chemical weapons attacks in Syria and for holding accountable the perpetrators. To the families of the victims of chemical weapons in Syria — and to the Syrian children, women and men who may be victims of future attacks — I extend our most sincere apologies. They should know that the United States, along with the rest of the Council, will not give up on seeking justice for their lost loved ones and protection for their families. They should know that Russia can obstruct the Council but that it cannot obstruct the truth. With the unity of the Council, or alone and unrestrained by Russia's obstructionism, we will continue to fight for justice and accountability in Syria.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to thank the Japanese delegation for submitting draft resolution S/2017/970 today.

As we reiterated yesterday (see S/PV.8105), experience has proved throughout the existence of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) that there is an urgent need to improve its working methods, in particular by conducting field visits to the sites where the use of chemical weapons is being investigated — including the inspection, recording and collection of evidence and samples in a timely fashion — and by considering all potential scenarios relating to the use of chemical weapons. Egypt has tried to ensure that any draft resolution of the Security Council on the extension of the JIM mandate would guarantee these measures without delving into technicalities that would undermine the implementation or independence of the Mechanism, and in a way that would provide a solid and sound foundation for its conclusions.

In line with the position that we have expressed previously and reiterated yesterday in explaining our abstention in the voting on the two draft resolutions that were before us, and also in line with our resolve to guard against the recurrent use of chemical weapons against our brethren in Syria and the need to identify the perpetrators of earlier crimes, we supported the Japanese draft today because it provides an opportunity to maintain that international tool, open broad prospects for the restructuring and development of the working methods of the Mechanism, and promote its credibility and the independence of its investigations.

We therefore express our regret that the Council could not adopt the draft resolution today and deplore the lack of trust among its members. However, we reiterate that we remain willing to work with our partners in the Security Council in the remaining weeks of our membership to consider any alternative that would achieve the purposes of the JIM in Syria.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France is appalled by the result of the voting as a result of Russia's veto — its third on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), its fifth on the Syrian chemical dossier this year, and its eleventh on Syria. Let us be clear. We respect and will always respect Russia, to which we are linked by many ties, but this growing number of vetoes raises questions. The question raised today is especially grave because it is fraught with potential consequences for the fight against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. Today's veto poses a serious threat to our common security.

What is at stake? If the JIM mandate is not renewed before midnight, it will be dissolved. That means that months of joint and good faith effort against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons in Syria will disappear with it. The goal of draft resolution S/2017/970, submitted by Japan — whose commitment I warmly commend — was a purely technical renewal of the regime for one month. It did not require a political statement of position, much less of ideology. It was a neutral, technical text that would have given us the time necessary to consider and discuss — in a word, to reach agreement and demonstrate to the entire world that the Council can meet its responsibilities.

If we do not take care, the outcome of today's voting as a result of Russia's veto could have a threefold effect. First, without any new development before midnight, it would signify *ipso facto* the end of the JIM, a mechanism created by the Council at the initiative of Russia and the United States to combat the proliferation and use of chemical weapons in Syria. Secondly, the vote threatens to undermine the mechanics of the international chemical non-proliferation regime. It will be interpreted by some as giving *carte blanche* to the proliferation and use of such weapons elsewhere, since we have been collectively incapable of preventing or punishing it in Syria. Moreover, it threatens to create a fertile breeding ground for chemical terrorism, which we will fear. Thirdly, given the fact that the international chemical non-proliferation regime is highly evolved, its

weakening could establish a dangerous and potentially fatal precedent for the other non-proliferation regimes, which the community of nations drafted and developed patiently year after year, stone upon stone, over preceding decades and which constitute the backbone of our collective security.

If all of this should come about, we will pay a heavy price for it. We must therefore not be discouraged by these disastrous possibilities. If we believe in what we do — if each of us believes that we are here for a reason and with a mission — it is impossible to give up. We have no right to do so. I therefore wish to share France's deep conviction that today's disastrous vote cannot be the final word. France will resign itself neither to this apparent failure nor to political games that fall far short of what is at stake. In the face of the enormity and gravity of those stakes, we have no right to give up while the eyes of the entire world are upon us. We have no right to be discouraged. My country can be relied upon to pursue its efforts in all appropriate forums in order to combat impunity in Syria and elsewhere and to promote, everywhere and at all times, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regimes on which everyone's security depends.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Last month, I was disappointed that a simple technical rollover of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was blocked by Russia. Yesterday, I was deeply disappointed that, even after extensive efforts to reach an agreement, a further reasonable attempt to renew the mandate was again vetoed by Russia. That veto seriously damaged my hope that those using chemical weapons in Syria would be identified and held to account.

But now, I am frankly astounded that Russia has rebuffed Japan's perfectly sensible proposal to ask the Secretary-General and the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to consider the structure and methodology of the JIM. This third veto in a month clearly exposes — if it was not already obvious — Russia's determination to protect its Syrian ally, regardless of the harm it causes to the ban on the use of chemical weapons, to the wider international system of rules, and to Russia's own reputation.

The Council set up the JIM unanimously as the most appropriate mechanism to investigate allegations of

chemical-weapons use in Syria, and since its inception it has had many successes. Its experienced and expert staff have demonstrated complete impartiality. Its investigations have been professional, thorough and rigorous. It has concluded that the Syrian regime is responsible for blatant, repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people in an increasingly reckless and deadly manner. It has also found that Da'esh is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The failure to renew the JIM is a failure to uncover the truth behind the conduct of all actors who used chemical weapons in Syria.

As I said yesterday (see S/PV.8105), those of us who are committed to upholding the international system will not cease in our efforts to stop the use of chemical weapons and to identify and hold to account those who use these vile weapons. We will keep going not only to bring justice to those who have suffered from the use of these despicable weapons, but also to deter those who might think of doing so in the future.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I will be brief. In my grief, I do not need to repeat what I said in the Chamber yesterday (see S/PV.8105) about the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the importance of maintaining it. We appreciate the efforts made by you, Mr. President, and other partners in trying your very best to extend the mandate of the JIM. We deeply regret that again this was not possible. We believe that we all as, members of the Council, have the responsibility to do everything possible to ensure accountability for the use of chemical weapons and that there is no further proliferation of such weapons.

Therefore we ask that informal consultations be convened immediately following this meeting to ensure that we are absolutely convinced that we have exhausted every avenue and every effort before the mandate of the JIM expires later tonight.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I can hardly find the words to express my frustration over the voting outcome. We did not have any illusions about it, but some hope remained until the very last moment. It vanished very quickly, however. Ukraine voted in favour of draft resolution S/2017/970, fully realizing its crucial importance, not only for the existence of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), but, ultimately, for the entire non-proliferation regime.

I wish to recall that Ukraine was among those States that supported the technical rollover of the JIM's mandate for one year as the best option. We were trying hard to avoid a repetition of last year, when mandate negotiations in 2016 put a strain on the Mechanism's activities. This year, the world is witnessing an even more dramatic situation. The obstruction by one Security Council member deprived the JIM of any chance of continuing its important work. Yesterday's and today's meetings have clearly demonstrated that the Russian Federation will never allow an independent investigation of the horrible crimes in Syria to take place, regardless of the document proposed.

Despite numerous attempts and the faithful efforts of the Council's majority to secure the JIM, Russia is the only country that preferred to do its utmost to protect both the Al-Assad regime and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from being held accountable. It did so intentionally and in an extremely cynical way. Given the fact that the vast majority of incidents in which chemical weapons were probably used have not yet been investigated, we do not exclude the possibility that the Russian side might also be interested in preventing the JIM from uncovering the truth about those cases. Such desperate efforts to shut down the JIM at all costs actually raise a serious question regarding the identity of those who possibly directly sponsored such crimes.

The Russian delegation continues to recall that, together with the United States, it initiated the establishment of the JIM. It should now take full responsibility for unilaterally killing it. It is our strong belief that, notwithstanding the current situation, we have to continue to spare no effort to avert the increasing risk of the further use of chemical weapons, while bearing in mind the innocent victims who have already paid the ultimate price. Preventing such crimes in the future is vital and necessary.

In conclusion, the Russian delegation sees no problem in interrupting the JIM's mandate. Let us not fool ourselves. Once the JIM's mandate ends tonight, there will be nothing to roll over. In their statements, many delegations committed to continuing to work on the JIM. We should realize that, as of tomorrow, we will have to begin those efforts from scratch.

Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay voted in favour of draft resolution S/2017/970, introduced by Japan for the following reasons.

First, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was established by resolution 2235 (2015). It is our Mechanism.

Secondly, if the JIM were allowed to pursue its work on the use of chemical weapons on a regular basis, it would identify those responsible for the use of those banned weapons, which constitutes atrocious crimes directed against innocent civilians. The JIM is crucial for combating impunity.

Thirdly, based on my second point, the work of the JIM could be a deterrent to the use of those weapons in other conflicts.

Fourthly, in such a long-standing and complex conflict as that in Syria, whose political and humanitarian dimensions we assess every week in the Security Council, along with the chemical weapons dossier, it is best to have a dedicated mechanism like the JIM to address it.

Fifthly, as we said yesterday (see S/PV.8105), it is paradoxical that the Security Council, which established the JIM in the first place, has decided to sign its death warrant.

In conclusion, we call once again for an end to the current polarization and impasse in the Security Council, and for the time necessary to be set aside to save the Mechanism. To that end, we echo the request made by the representative of Sweden.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): As we said yesterday (see S/PV.8105), Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the continuation of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). The possible ways of improving the structure and the mandate of the Mechanism are a subject worthy of further discussion and negotiations. In that regard, the proposed technical draft resolution has a special provision for the possibility of a break in the continued operation of the Mechanism, and is acceptable to my delegation. That is why we supported draft resolution S/2017/970.

It is regrettable that we were unable to save the Joint Investigative Mechanism. My delegation calls on the parties concerned to continue dialogue so as to find common ground. Should there be a need with regard to mediation assistance in order to bring the two sides together and reconcile their divergent positions, Kazakhstan stands ready to take such an initiative.

Time is of the essence, and we see a great need for all of us to arrive at a mutually satisfying path leading towards a unified vision for the future of the JIM.

Mr. Llorentty Solís (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will also be very brief. First of all, allow me to thank Japan for introducing draft resolution S/2017/970, which was intended to provide a solution to this difficult process. This morning during consultations, we once again condemned the use of chemical weapons and advocated for the need of an independent and impartial investigation to identify those responsible for those atrocity crimes. Similarly, we expressed our concern about the lack of communication among members of the Security Council that has currently led us to exactly the same situation as yesterday (see S/PV.8105).

We once can express our gratitude for the draft proposal. We endorse many of its principles, but we regret the fact that without the participation and input of all actors, we will predictably repeat the same scenario. In that vein, we believe that we continue to be faced with the task of ensuring that the use of chemical weapons in Syria or anywhere else is duly investigated. We believe that the Council must continue to work on this issue until we reach a full consensus so as to avoid repeating the situations in which we find ourselves today, and found ourselves yesterday.

My delegation therefore joins the representative of Sweden in proposing that, at the end of this meeting, we meet for informal consultations on the matter.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The situation in Syria is at a critical stage. The political process is facing important opportunities. Any action taken on the Syrian issue must focus on further advancing the overall political process and strive for long-term stability and security in that country. We have repeatedly explained our position on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Significant differences persist among Council Members on the issue. It is imperative for the parties to remain calm, exercise restraint and find an appropriate solution that is acceptable to all through patient consultations.

Given the major differences among Council Members, forcing a vote does not contribute to resolving the issue of chemical weapons in Syria or serve to safeguard the unity and authority of the Council, nor does it help to advance the political

process in Syria. China felt that it had to abstain in voting on draft resolution S/2017/970. We once again regret the division seen on the Council today.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation has participated in good faith in all the consultations, multilateral and bilateral, designed to bring the positions of Security Council members closer on the extension of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to investigate instances of chemical weapons used in Syria. Any attempt to present things differently amounts to nothing but intentional disinformation.

We note the initiative of our Japanese colleagues, which they presented with the intention of helping to find a way out of the situation. But we cannot support their proposal for a short technical extension of the JIM's mandate. We informed the members of the Council of that decision and explained our reasons. The draft resolution (S/2017/970) was nevertheless put to the vote. This step has nothing to do with anxiety about the fate of the Mechanism, since everyone knows that it is winding up its work today. As far as we are concerned, no extension of the JIM's mandate is possible unless we fix the fundamental shortcomings in its work. Any other possibility can be excluded since the Mechanism leadership — already covered with shame thanks to its fictitious investigation of the episode of sarin use in Khan Shaykhun — has signed on to the unsubstantiated accusations that have been made against Syria.

I do not really know whether those who have been condemning Russia so vehemently today have actually read the report or our comments on it. Japan's draft resolution has presented the Secretary-General with the impossible task of submitting proposals that reflect the views of the members of the Security Council. As our heated discussion has emphasized, in many respects they are diametrically opposed.

We cannot consider the subject of extending the JIM in isolation from the general context. Yesterday's Security Council meeting, which was politically loaded in ways that had very little to do with chemical weapons in Syria, left a very unpleasant aftertaste. We are even more alarmed about what is going on in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The United States delegation introduced a draft resolution (S/2017/962) that essentially paves the way for giving Syria an ultimatum. What are

they trying to achieve? Destruction of the results of the unprecedented collective efforts to accomplish Syria's chemical demilitarization that Russia and the United States launched? Have they thought about the consequences of the steps they have taken in New York and The Hague for a political settlement in Syria? What is going on now in the Security Council in New York, and what they came up with in The Hague, are links in a single chain.

Opinions have been voiced that a failure on the part of the Security Council to come to a decision on extending the JIM might reflect badly on the Council's authority and dignity. We suggest looking at it from the other direction. Will it really add to the Security Council's authority if we extend the life of a body that for the past two years has been rubber-stamping unsubstantiated accusations against Syria, as if nothing had happened? Is that worth making the Security Council an accomplice in a grandiose fraud? Did it look good when, at the April meeting convened after the American air strike on the Shayrat airbase (see S/PV.7922), many delegations either acted as if nothing had happened or flat-out supported an act of aggression against a sovereign State?

There is absolutely no basis for assuming that ending the work of the JIM signals the emergence of some kind of new challenges to the regime of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, whose implementation Russia views with the greatest possible feeling of responsibility. That has been our historical role, and we cherish it. The non-proliferation regime depends on international instruments that have nothing to do with the JIM. But what really needs attention is the growing threat of chemical terrorism in the Middle East.

What has been going on here today is like a bad play. Russia is blamed for shutting down the JIM. The people claiming that seem to have short memories. Have they forgotten that yesterday it was they who shut it down by voting against the draft resolution submitted by Russia, China and Bolivia (S/2017/968)? Yesterday, when a vote was taken (see S/PV.8105) on the Russian-Chinese draft resolution submitted by Bolivia, the Council had a good opportunity to give the Mechanism a new chance by improving and strengthening it. But the effort was blocked — effectively vetoed by three permanent members of the Council. Do not bother trying to lay the responsibility on Russia now. It was a conscious choice on the part of those whose priority

clearly has nothing to do with ensuring an objective investigation of chemical crimes in the region but is all about keeping the pressure on Syria and having confrontations with Russia.

There is no need to create drama out of the end of the JIM's work. There is nothing preventing Council members from continuing to discuss the question of improving this instrument with a view to its possible resumption of its work in the future. But for that it is essential to come to a common understanding of the importance of eliminating the JIM's systemic shortcomings, which have ruined it. Our draft resolution remains on the table. If those who are concerned about renewing its activities really want it, they can get involved in meaningful work on its text and stop dealing in political propaganda.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Italy.

Italy supported the draft resolution put forward by Japan (S/2017/970) and would like to thank the Japanese delegation for its effort. We have already affirmed many times, including in this Chamber yesterday, the

importance we attach to the global non-proliferation architecture and to ensuring accountability for violations of its norms. In our view, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is a crucial tool in that regard, and we are not ready to simply accept that its existence is over. We are once again disappointed in the result of the vote. We have until midnight. If there is even the slightest chance of renewing the JIM's mandate by then, we will work constructively to draft that last chance. Otherwise, we will continue striving to find agreement on an issue of crucial importance to us all and to the Council's ability to fulfil its responsibilities. Italy also supports Sweden's proposal in that regard.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more speakers inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations, as requested by Sweden, to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8108th meeting

Monday, 20 November 2017, 9 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli Frieri

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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17-39012 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Mladenov is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Jerusalem.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: I brief the members of the Security Council today as critical infra-Palestinian talks are scheduled to open in Cairo tomorrow. The United Nations, the Middle East Quartet and the international community continue to support Egyptian efforts to sustainably implement the recent infra-Palestinian agreement and return Gaza under the control of the legitimate Palestinian Authority.

By signing the Cairo agreement on 12 October, Palestinians embarked on a long road that could lead to reconciliation. First, however, they must resolve the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and return the Strip to the full civilian and security control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). If success is to be achieved, the failed policies of the past must be avoided, security for Palestinians and Israelis must be preserved, and all sides must be willing to compromise in the interest of peace.

Let me start with the good news. On 1 November, we witnessed a landmark step as the Palestinian Authority regained control over Gaza crossings. For the first time in more than a decade, on 18 November, the Rafah border crossing opened under PA control. The handover has eased access at the crossings for Palestinians with permits and ended the illegal taxation imposed by Hamas at the crossings since June 2007. The handover, if translated into full civilian and security control by the Palestinian Authority of Gaza, could be

a step towards the normalization of movement in and out of the Strip.

Another important step happened on 2 November when the Palestinian committee tasked with rationalizing and integrating Gaza's public sector held its first meeting. Meanwhile, the transfer of responsibility at Gaza-based public institutions is slowly proceeding as well. Ministers of Education, Health, Transport and Environment, among others, as well as technical teams from ministries in Ramallah, have travelled to Gaza to begin restoring Government control. Some 150 PA-employed teachers have returned to work for the first time since 2007. A 10-day registration period for all PA employees in Gaza began on 12 November to determine staffing numbers, based on an evaluation of qualifications against needs. The process is proceeding in an organized manner. Some ministries, with low numbers of employees, have already accomplished the task, and others are expected to finish within a set time frame. I encourage all sides to use tomorrow's meeting in Cairo to reinforce their commitment to a gradual process of implementing the Cairo agreement and to ensure that positive momentum is sustained by upholding commitments and ensuring follow-up.

Regrettably, there is also some not-so-good news. Despite progress in implementing the Cairo agreement, Gaza residents have not seen any improvements to their daily lives. The lack of electricity has been devastating for the provision of basic services. Power outages of 18 to 20 hours a day continue; most of the population has access to piped water for only three to five hours every five days; untreated sewage continues to flow into the Mediterranean Sea at catastrophic levels; 45 per cent of essential drugs and medical supplies have now reached zero stock in Gaza. Only the most critical health, water and sanitation facilities are functioning, thanks to donor-funded emergency fuel distributed by the United Nations.

As the Palestinian Government seeks to return to Gaza, it should take immediate action to reverse measures that add to the burden of Palestinians living there. The United Nations humanitarian appeal for Gaza for 2017 calls for \$25 million in new funding to meet the most critical priorities — almost \$11 million of which remains unmet. I urge donors to support the appeal in order to save lives. Last week, as co-Chair of the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee, Norway convened a donor meeting in Ramallah to discuss how to support

returning Gaza under Palestinian Authority control. The discussion focused on three themes.

The first theme was the need to immediately alleviate the humanitarian situation on the ground, namely, by increasing electricity supply to at least pre-crisis levels, and accelerating the delivery of projects that have direct impact on the lives of Gaza's residents. The envoys of the Middle East Quartet have already tasked the Office of the Quartet with producing a list of projects that can be expedited. I encourage donors to do the same. Such actions are necessary to sustain support for the Cairo-led process on the ground.

Secondly, the donors also discussed the need to see a realistic plan by the Palestinian Authority on how it intends to take up its responsibilities in Gaza, which the international community can support financially and technically.

Thirdly, our common goal remains the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. Difficult issues — including security and putting all weapons under Government control, the rule of law and the functioning of the judiciary, civil service reform and other complicated challenges — will have to be dealt with in a step-by-step manner.

Turning to broader political dynamics on the ground, I welcome the restoration of full security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It was publicly announced that that started on 8 November. That is a positive development, as coordination is critical to the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

In a very worrying development, however, on 30 October, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) uncovered yet another tunnel that extended from Gaza into Israel. During the operation, at least 12 Palestinian militants were killed underground. According to statements by a spokesperson for Islamic Jihad, the group's aim in constructing the tunnel was to "kidnap Israeli soldiers," and it also stated that it will continue to pursue that goal.

I call on the international community to join the United Nations in condemning the continued construction of tunnels and the utterance of such reckless statements. At a time when Palestinians in Gaza — who have lived with closures for a decade, survived three conflicts and have had to struggle to merely exist — are seeing hope for the future, such actions and statements

risk a dangerous escalation that could destroy the prospects for intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

In other developments, on 31 October, a 25-year-old Palestinian man was shot dead by Israeli security forces while in his car near a West Bank settlement. The Israeli authorities launched an investigation after an initial IDF probe indicated that the driver did not appear to have been attempting a vehicular attack when he was killed. On 17 November, two Israelis were injured in a ramming attack in the West Bank; the Palestinian driver was shot and injured by the security forces. Violence and incitement remain one of the hallmarks of the conflict, and they need to be addressed in order to rebuild trust between both sides.

Turning to the question of settlements, Israeli planning authorities have approved building permits for at least 418 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlements of Gilo and Ramat Shlomo. They also issued a conditional approval of 178 housing units in the settlement of Nof Zion, located in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabel Mukaber. On 10 November, the Israeli Prime Minister pledged to advance \$226 million for the construction of infrastructure in the occupied West Bank that improves the connectivity of settlements to Israel, potentially facilitating their expansion.

The United Nations considers all settlement activities illegal under international law. They constitute a substantial obstacle to peace and should cease. Unfortunately, legislative action that undermines the viability of the two-State solution also continues. The Knesset considered a legislative amendment that would require a majority of 80 out of 120 members to approve any transfer of territory currently included in Israel's defined municipal boundaries of Jerusalem to a "foreign entity".

Against that backdrop, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 30 Palestinian structures, displacing 53 persons, including 31 children, across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Three Bedouin herding communities in Area C, including Ain al-Hilweh, Um al Jmal and Jabal al-Baba, are at risk of having a total of 520 structures demolished after receiving removal-of-property orders in recent weeks. Donor-funded structures serving as schools that are also threatened with demolition are of particular concern.

Turning very briefly to Lebanon, Prime Minister Hariri's resignation, while on a trip to Saudi Arabia on 4 November, shocked Lebanon and the region. While

new uncertainties have arisen, the people of Lebanon have united behind President Aoun's call for Hariri to return. Following the Secretary-General's statement of 5 November, international statements of support for Lebanon's security, stability, sovereignty and independence have been issued at the highest levels. Prime Minister Hariri is now in Paris and expected to return to Lebanon later this week. The Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, my colleague, Philippe Lazzarini, is scheduled to brief the Council on 29 November.

The security situation in the Golan remains of concern. Fighting between the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and armed groups and between different armed groups in parts of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side continues. In recent weeks, there were reported incidents of spillover fire from the Bravo to the Alpha side and retaliatory fire across the ceasefire line. Those developments undermine the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces and have the potential to escalate tensions and jeopardize the long-standing ceasefire between Israel and Syria.

Let me conclude with a few observations on Palestinian unity efforts. I again commend Egypt for its leadership throughout the process. Many previous attempts to bridge the Palestinian divide have failed. We cannot allow this current effort to become another missed opportunity. From the outset, I have consistently engaged with Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, the region and all stakeholders. Everyone understands that failure today will destroy hope for the foreseeable future. That division damages the Palestinian cause for statehood. Two million Palestinians in Gaza have high hopes that the Government's return will improve their lives. After living in abject misery under Hamas control and locked in by the closures, their situation is close to exploding.

With all the difficulties inherent in the Egyptian-led process and concerns about the timing and modalities of the Palestinian Authority's assumption of full civilian and security control of Gaza, the process must not be allowed to fail. If it does, it will most likely result in another devastating conflict. Whether that conflict would be triggered by a meltdown of law and order in Gaza, by the reckless action of extremists or by strategic choice, the result will be the same — devastation and suffering for all. That cycle must be avoided at all costs.

All of us, especially Palestinian leaders, Israel and the international community, have an important responsibility to advance the peace efforts. In that context, I am concerned about the implications of the latest developments related to the Palestinian Liberation Organization representative office in the United States. Only through constructive dialogue can we hope to advance peace, and I call on all parties to remain engaged in the peace effort.

I believe and hope that a genuine change in Gaza, including full security control by the Palestinian Authority, will contribute to restoring confidence in the feasibility of a comprehensive peace agreement. That is a Palestinian-owned process. All Palestinian factions must seize this opportunity to open a new page for their people.

The President: I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rosselli Frieri (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We once again thank the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, for his briefing. Above all, we thank him for his continued work, for which he can and will continue to count on the support of Uruguay, including when our term on the Security Council comes to an end.

Unfortunately, as has happened on numerous other occasions, we must begin our statement by condemning a fresh attack. This time, we condemn the attack that took place on 17 November on the West Bank, which was carried out by a Palestinian assailant and left two Israelis injured. Such violence and terrorist attacks, as well as their incitement and glorification, do nothing to advance peace, and they endanger the possibility of reaching a two-State solution.

This year marks many anniversaries related to the still unresolved conflict. This month marks 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, which initiated a process that ended with the partition of Palestine and was then finalized three decades later through General Assembly resolution 181 (II), exactly 70 years ago. It has also been 50 years since the 1967 war and the occupation of territories that followed.

Despite the numerous multilateral, regional and unilateral initiatives to try to end the conflict, we are still far from glimpsing a peaceful and mutually

acceptable solution. The two-State solution remains the only viable option to end the conflict — there is no alternative plan B. Direct bilateral negotiations must be relaunched as soon as possible to clarify all unresolved issues.

To achieve that goal, it is necessary to reverse current trends on the ground. If not, it will be extremely difficult for Palestine to consolidate its territory as a State. Uruguay maintains strong ties with both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine. We again reaffirm the right of Israel and Palestine to live peacefully, within secure and recognized borders, in an atmosphere of renewed cooperation that is free of any threat or act that might undermine peace.

Almost a year after the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), we regret that there has been little progress in its implementation, and that Israel has continued and intensified its settlement policy on Palestinian territory. We condemn that practice and call for its immediate cessation. We reject the explicit support of the Israeli authorities for that settlement policy, which continues to advance at full speed, despite resolution 2334 (2016) and the repeated calls of the entire international community.

We reiterate that settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace and the two-State solution. That policy is accompanied by the ongoing demolitions of Palestinian homes on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem and clearly illegal initiatives under international law to annex settlements under Israeli jurisdiction. Those actions clearly exacerbate tension; other actions and measures are necessary, which, to date, have not been taken. Otherwise, it will be increasingly difficult to arrive at a peaceful and mutually acceptable solution.

We await next month's presentation of the fourth quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) by the Special Coordinator. We reiterate our wish for the report to be circulated in writing prior to the meeting, so that we are able to analyse its findings and then voice our opinions following careful consideration of the document.

On a more positive note, the reconciliation agreement that was signed in October between the Hamas and Fatah Palestinian groups undoubtedly represents an important step towards achieving Palestinian unity. We thank Egypt for its important role in that successful process. The recent return of

the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip to retake control after a decade is very good news, which should be sufficiently highlighted and commended. The reunification of Palestine under a single, legitimate and democratic Government is essential to providing for the aspirations of the Palestinian people, and could substantially improve living conditions in an area that has been engulfed in a serious humanitarian crisis since the armed conflict of 2007.

For that agreement to be successfully implemented, it will also be essential that those measures be accompanied by agreements on security, the disarmament of Hamas and the renunciation of violence and the destruction of Israel as a declared objective.

In this still very complex scenario, in which there is a glimmer of hope, it is necessary, more than ever, that the Security Council and the entire international community remain united in their desire to see a peaceful resolution of all the aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Only then will we be able to exert due pressure on the authorities to stop the trends that threaten that process, and ask them to be sufficiently flexible and reasonable, so that they understand once and for all that peace is a much more valuable goal than the violence, hatred and injustice that have characterized the region over the past few decades.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the briefing by Mr. Nikolay Mladenov, the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

We are currently attending a further meeting to address the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Over the course of this meeting, we have not been given very encouraging news, and the persistent and challenging attitudes of the Government of Israel towards the international community remain.

For my delegation, it is disheartening that, a little more than 11 months after the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), none of the mandates set out therein have been fulfilled; on the contrary, according to the statement of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine in its letter to the presidency of the Council, dated 14 November, earlier this month the Israeli occupation forces issued demolition orders against 60 homes or infrastructure that are owned by Palestinians in Palestinian territory.

Those arbitrary measures that Israel intends to impose on Palestinian territory, which it has also forcefully occupied for more than 50 years ago, would result in the forced dispossession and displacement of 300 Palestinian civilians from the villages of Ain al-Hilweh and Um al-Jamal. In that regard, if Israel achieves its wish, the number of settlers in that region would increase from 6,000 to at least 12,000, which would be in direct and repeated violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

We note with deep concern the persistent inhuman blockade that is inflicted by the Government of Israel against the Palestinian people. We wish to remind that occupying Power that, since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967), of 22 November, it has acted in contempt of the primary principles of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.

With that in mind, we urgently call on all members of the Security Council to take immediate action, without further delay, to ensure that Israel ends what was described in the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 as "the longest-running military occupation in the modern world". The occupation violates the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and undermines the possibility of a two-State solution.

Bolivia is obliged to recall that, as a result of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, an energy crisis is forcing the Palestinian inhabitants of the region to live with only four hours of electricity per day. Due to interruptions in the provision of electricity, a humanitarian crisis has erupted in the form of an attack on the human right to health. Hospitals and medical centres are severely affected as they are forced to discharge patients prematurely, to mention but one of the many serious consequences affecting the population. For example, in August, five cancer patients died while waiting for permits to be issued by Israel in order to travel to receive the necessary treatment. Similarly, according to the aforementioned report, the supply of water to the Gaza Strip is limited to a few hours every four to five days, while the desalination plants operate at just 15 per cent of their capacity. Bolivia urges Israel to put an immediate and complete end to the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip and immediately

allow an ongoing and unconditional opening of the crossing points in order to allow humanitarian aid and commercial goods to enter and people to leave.

On the other hand, we take this opportunity to welcome with great optimism the fact that, as a result of the agreement reached between the parties on 12 October in Cairo, a solution to the intra-Palestinian conflict has been reached, allowing the Palestinian Authority to resume full functionality in the territories of the Gaza Strip. We are pleased that the world is able to witness this true expression of Palestinian unity. In this regard, we express our satisfaction and appreciation to the Government of Egypt and other countries of the region that are supporting this process to strengthen the legitimate presence of the democratic and legitimately Palestinian National Authority in the Gaza Strip so that, to the extent possible, it may overcome the devastating humanitarian crisis that persists in the region.

Bolivia, as a pacifist State, believes that the only way to achieve just and lasting peace in the conflict between Israel and Palestine is through sincere dialogue and clear expressions of political will on the part of both sides to achieve the two-State solution. To that end, we reiterate our full commitment to multilateralism within the framework of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We condemn violence, regardless of its origin, and call on the parties to renounce it.

As on previous occasions, we reiterate our expectation that the quarterly report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) will be provided to us in writing, which would allow us to see in detail the progress made in its implementation. We would also like to see updated maps of all the settlements in occupied Palestinian territories.

Finally, Bolivia reaffirms its support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people and their right to live in a free, sovereign and independent State within its pre-1967 international borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 9.35 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8109th meeting

Monday, 20 November 2017, 11.05 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Lambertini	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Demissie
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Alimzhanov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Illichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermudez Alvarez

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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17-39024 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 11 05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Michel Kafando.

Mr. Kafando (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of November, and to take this opportunity to greet the members of the Council.

In my briefing, I intend, on the one hand, to report on the activities that I have carried out since the Council's previous consideration of the question of Burundi (see S/PV.8013) and, on the other hand, to take stock of recent developments in the matter. The mission assigned to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi is very clear. It is to support the efforts of the region — in other words, those of the mediator and the facilitator — in order to advance the negotiations whose purpose, I recall, is to implement the inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue. That is what I have been doing by meeting with the Burundian authorities and political actors, meeting with the Burundian opposition and representatives of civil society — including those who are in exile — and meeting with African Heads of State and partners of Burundi.

My first discussions with the mediator, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, took place in August in Entebbe. They focused on the urgent need to convene a regional mini-summit in order to assess the progress of the negotiations and, where possible,

to coordinate decisions. At the conclusion of our discussions, the mediator informed me of his intention to meet with President Pierre Nkurunziza. I know that he recently sent a special envoy carrying a message to his counterpart in Burundi. I also met a number of African leaders, always with the aim of raising their awareness and requesting their support, given their ties to the Burundian authorities.

My meeting with the Burundian opposition abroad took place in Brussels on 14 October, and brought together the leaders of the National Council for Respect for the Arusha Agreement and the Rule of Law (CNARED) as well as civil-society leaders in exile. At this first meeting, I primarily explained the purpose of my mission, which is chiefly a good-offices mission that seeks, in support of regional efforts, to bring closer together the positions of the Government and the opposition with a view to promoting inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue. My visit to Brussels also gave me the opportunity to have discussions with the Foreign Minister of Belgium and some representatives of the European Union on the prevailing situation in Burundi. My return to Bujumbura was an opportunity to canvass the views of two very influential moral authorities of the Catholic Church of Burundi, namely, the bishops of Bujumbura and Gitega.

My meeting on 2 November with the Ombudsman focused on the discussions he had had with the opposition abroad in Helsinki and on the adoption by the Government of Burundi of the new revised Constitution. The Ombudsman assured me that, apart from the decision not to take into account previous terms served and the seven-year term of the presidential term proposed in the Constitution, the Government has respected all the other provisions of the Arusha Agreement. All these activities that I was involved in were contained in a report to the facilitator, with whom I met on 3 November in Dar es Salaam.

Based on the overall summary, the facilitator, in agreement with the mediator and the Burundian Government, has decided to convene, on 27 November, in Arusha, a dialogue session between the representatives of the Government and all the other Burundian stakeholders, including, of course, the opposition in exile. These meetings will take place from 27 November to 8 December, as I said, in Arusha. We have been informed that the CNARED is not disposed to participate. A summit of Heads of State of the Community of East African States is envisaged for

January 2018, which, *inter alia*, will have to evaluate the outcomes of these meetings.

With regard to the situation on the ground in Burundi, I was in Bujumbura two weeks ago, and everything appeared to be calm, apart from some expressions of outrage against the International Criminal Court's decision to open preliminary investigations into crimes against humanity committed since 2015 in the country. The protests also denounced reports of human rights violations, including allegations of arrests, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, inhuman and degrading treatment, restrictions on freedom of association, intimidation and even hate speech. The Burundian authorities have already turned their attention to the upcoming elections, although the issue of inclusive dialogue has not yet found a proper resolution.

In conclusion, the United Nations remains obligated, regardless of the difficulties ahead, to continue its good-offices mission, standing shoulder to shoulder with the subregion, in order to extricate Burundi from the current crisis. We remain convinced that the political process is the only way of untangling the Burundian crisis.

Finally, with regard to relations between United Nations and Burundi, the relationship seems to me to be moving in the right direction. Indeed, the United Nations Secretariat and the Government are continuing negotiations on a draft headquarters agreement. It should be noted, however, that the Government has not yet taken the steps necessary to implement its decision to fully cooperate with the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Negotiations are also ongoing with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The foregoing represents the main facts that I have noted since the question of Burundi was discussed during my last briefing to the Security Council on the subject.

The President: I thank Mr. Kafando for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

Mr. Lauber: Mr. President, on behalf of the members of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I would like to thank you for inviting me to brief the Security Council and for the continuous constructive cooperation between the Council and the configuration. Members

of the configuration noted with appreciation the positive reference to the PBC contained in the Council's presidential statement S/PRST/2017/13, of 2 August.

As per established practice, the following statement has been submitted to and approved by the members of the configuration, including the country concerned, Burundi.

Since my last briefing to the Council on 26 July (see S/PV.8013), I have had a number of meetings in New York, Addis Ababa and Geneva on Burundi in my capacity as Chair of the configuration. During the high-level week of the General Assembly, I met with His Excellency Mr. Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Burundi's Minister of External Relations and International Cooperation, and we discussed the continuation of the socioeconomic dialogue. Minister Nyamitwe confirmed that the next round of the dialogue will include additional partners, as agreed at the latest retreat, held in Bujumbura on 12 July. Also during the high-level week, I met the Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC), Mr. Libérat Mfumukeko; the European Union Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes, Mr. Koen Vervaeke; and the Special Envoy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Great Lakes Region, Ms. Katja Lasseur.

On 12 October, I had a meeting with His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, the former President of Tanzania and the EAC Facilitator for Burundi, as we were both in Geneva on that day.

From 25 to 28 October, I used the opportunity of a visit to Addis Ababa to discuss the situation in Burundi with the Permanent Secretary of Burundi's Foreign Ministry, His Excellency Mr. Jean de Dieu Ndikumana; the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, His Excellency Mr. Smail Chergui; the new AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, His Excellency Mr. Basile Ikouebe; and the Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, His Excellency Mr. Haile Menkerios. While in Addis, I also met the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Under-Secretary-General Vera Songwe, as well as experts from the AU, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and members of the diplomatic community.

On 8 November, I updated the configuration on my activities and on recent developments in Burundi. The new United Nations Resident Coordinator in Burundi,

Mr. Garry Conille, participated in that meeting of the configuration. He characterized the situation in Burundi as one of chronic vulnerability and informed Member States about United Nations efforts aimed at strengthening the resilience of the population.

Representatives from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees highlighted the gravity of the humanitarian situation and indicated that the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance will possibly soon reach 6 million people, that is, over half of the population. They noted a funding gap for the humanitarian response plan of 50 per cent, as well as for the Regional Refugee Response Plan, which is currently funded at only 19 per cent.

In the subsequent discussion, the members of the configuration expressed support for the engagement of the configuration, namely, for its efforts to draw attention to the deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian situation. Member States reiterated their unequivocal support for the EAC-led dialogue process, although some of them expressed concern over the lack of progress in the process. The human rights situation was described by several delegations as concerning. In that regard, the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Ambassador Albert Shingiro, indicated that the negotiations between his Government and OHCHR about the outstanding memorandum of understanding were in their final phase.

A number of representatives enquired about the prospects of an amendment of the Constitution, and they stressed their concern about the potential impact on the spirit of the Arusha Accord. Other representatives noted that amending the Constitution is part of Burundi's sovereign rights. The Permanent Representative of Burundi stressed that this was an internal matter and reassured PBC members that changes to the Constitution would not be detrimental to the spirit of the Arusha Accord.

From my interactions in recent months, I am drawing the following conclusions:

First, with regard to the political dialogue, President Mkapa remains committed to facilitating the EAC-led political dialogue and he continues to enjoy support inside and outside the region. At the same time, the facilitation remains challenging. While I heard disappointment regarding the lack of progress

in the dialogue process, I was encouraged to see that Secretary-General Guterres, as well as the members of the East African Community, the African Union and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region continue to pay considerable attention to the situation in Burundi. As the Special Envoy just mentioned, the holding of the next Arusha round has been tentatively scheduled for late November. I would like to encourage Burundi's political stakeholders to fully commit to the continuation of the EAC-led process and to constructively participate in the planned session.

Secondly, with regard to the socioeconomic situation, national and international actors continue to highlight challenges in the areas of food security, health, education and energy. Against this background, international partners are increasingly concentrating on strengthening the resilience of Burundi's population and on their immediate humanitarian needs. On 20 October, for example, the European Union announced a new population resilience support programme, with a volume of €95 million.

Thirdly, on human rights, in my contacts I continued to hear reports about human rights violations in Burundi, as well as regrets about the outstanding memorandums of understanding with the OHCHR and the African Union for their work in Burundi. In my meetings with the representatives of the Government of Burundi, I continued to encourage them to swiftly conclude these agreements.

The human rights situation has been discussed, as the Assembly knows, in the Human Rights Council in mid-September and by the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 28 October. As is well known, at its thirty-sixth session in Geneva, the Human Rights Council adopted two resolutions on Burundi; one extends the mandate of the Commission of Inquiry for one year; the other asks the High Commissioner to appoint an expert who will provide technical assistance and capacity-building to the Government in the area of human rights.

Fourthly, with regard to the question of refugees, many of my interlocutors pointed to the return of refugees from Tanzania to Burundi. On 31 August in Dar es Salaam, the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees agreed to assist the voluntary repatriation of 12,900 refugees who had by then registered their desire to return. At the latest configuration meeting,

Ms. Wafaa Saeed, the Deputy Director of the OCHA Coordination and Response Division, underlined the fact that the voluntary character of these repatriations is essential and must be respected in the current movement of return. As for reintegration, Ms. Saeed said:

“There is a strong need to improve the socioeconomic and human rights situation in Burundi to ensure the sustainability of returns and reintegration at the community level, both for refugees and those returning from internal displacement within Burundi.”

In the subsequent discussion, it was also underlined that it is essential to safeguard the civilian character of refugee camps in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

In view of this situation, I suggested to the members of the PBC Burundi configuration that they focus on the following four points for the time being.

First, national, regional and international actors should continue to fully support the mediation efforts undertaken by President Museveni and President Mkapa on behalf of the EAC.

Secondly, while the ongoing efforts on the political track remain important, the forthcoming election cycle of 2020 requires increasing attention from all of us. I believe that some kind of road map is required, defining the necessary conditions for free, fair, peaceful and democratic elections, as well as the necessary steps to get there. I also believe that the PBC should be able to contribute, in one way or another, to such an endeavour.

Thirdly, the socioeconomic conversation must complement these efforts with a focus on addressing the needs of the population, as well as existing obstacles for cooperation. Such conversations with the Government need to involve additional partners who were not able to participate in our Bujumbura retreat of 12 July. I remain committed to engaging on the socioeconomic situation not only with the Government and Burundi's main donors, but also with the private sector, African economic actors and academia.

Fourthly, the question of truth and national reconciliation should receive more attention and support. This will be one of the issues I am planning to raise during my next visit to Burundi, which is tentatively scheduled for early 2018.

The President: I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michael Kafando, and Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

Bolivia values and supports the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to pursue the inter-Burundi dialogue in an inclusive environment. In this regard, we see as significant progress the recent meeting in Bujumbura among Mr. Kafando and the Burundian authorities, the Ombudsman, the Archbishops of Bujumbura and Gitega, and the accredited diplomatic corps in the country, as well as the Special Envoy's visit to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Bolivia also encourages all parties to support the mediation being carried out by former President of Tanzania Mr. Benjamin Mkapa and by President of Uganda Mr. Yoweri Museveni, in accordance with the Arusha Accord, which must continue to be the cornerstone of this process. In the same way, we call on the parties to implement the road map proposed by Mr. Mkapa in order to achieve consensus and generate the conditions necessary for a peaceful environment during the upcoming elections to be held in 2020.

With that in mind, we believe that inclusive dialogue is a prerequisite to solving the crisis. We therefore call on all parties to engage in dialogue and to take steps to restore trust and promote national reconciliation. It is also important that the parties implement the agreements and especially that they work together in order to reach a negotiated political settlement. In this connection, we acknowledge the efforts and work of the East African Community (EAC), the Special Envoy of the African Union, the President of the Burundi configuration in the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country team.

We encourage them to continue with that work and to strive to coordinate their efforts in order to achieve better cooperation. We reiterate that all efforts should take place in the context of respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Burundi.

We appreciate what was stated in the the communiqué of 19 October of this year at the seventh

Summit of Heads of State the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which mentions the improvement of the security situation in Burundi and the support of the Summit for the inter-Burundian dialogue led by the EAC. In that regard, we note the efforts of the Burundi Government to re-establish peace after the 2015 crisis, and we highlight the fact that the security situation in the country has improved. We encourage the Government to continue to build a peaceful environment that contributes to the stability and development of its country in the context of respect for human rights.

In addition, we highlight the cooperation of the Government of Burundi with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General during his visit. We also underscore the fact that both parties have designated ad hoc teams to negotiate and to finalize the cooperation agreement between the Government of Burundi and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in Bujumbura. We also recognize the efforts of the Government and the Ombudsman in raising awareness with regard to the refugees. In that regard, we welcome the voluntary return of 15,000 refugees to Burundi.

We encourage the international community to continue to step up the funding of the humanitarian response plan in Burundi. We call on countries that have imposed sanctions to consider lifting them, since the sanctions have proven to have negative consequences for the lives of groups in situations of vulnerability, such as women and children. Moreover, it should be taken into account that unilateral sanctions constitute a violation of international law. The sanctions have a negative impact on the implementation of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I reiterate that they violate the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we believe that the full and committed involvement of the international community, and of all parties, is of the utmost importance given the complexity of the process. In that regard, it is vital to continue to consolidate the bases for achieving lasting stability in Burundi in the context of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to thank Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

Uruguay reiterates its concern about the political, humanitarian and human rights situation in Burundi, whose people are suffering from the devastating consequences of the crisis. We note the report of Special Envoy Kafando on the results of his recent visit to Burundi, which sought to help to relaunch inter-Burundian dialogue process. We also note his report on his meeting with the facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, former President Benjamin William Mkapa. We reiterate our full support for his handling of the situation and encourage him in carrying out his work to continue to involve a broader range of interlocutors from both the Government and the opposition, as well as civil society.

In addition, we once again acknowledge the tireless efforts of the regional and subregional bodies to overcome the stalemate in the political process in Burundi. At their most recent summits, both the African Union and the East African Community reaffirmed their full commitment to a peaceful solution to the crisis and underscored that dialogue was the only possible way forward.

It is also worth recalling the road map that was presented by facilitator Mkapa, which includes a series of specific steps to relaunch the political process and to generate conditions conducive to transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020.

In that regard, Uruguay particularly encourages the countries of the region to support Burundi in a unified and coordinated way. We also call on all Burundian parties to commit in good faith to the next stages of the dialogue process, expected in the coming weeks.

At the same time, we demand that all actors refrain from taking any step that could exacerbate the political and social tension in the country, thereby jeopardizing peace and stability and undermining the correct way forward for the dialogue process.

Uruguay cannot but reiterate its concern about the human rights situation in Burundi. In that regard, we strongly condemn each and every abuse and violation of human rights, whoever commits them, including cases of extrajudicial executions, sexual violence in the context of the political crisis, arrests and arbitrary detentions, and the harassment and intimidation of civil society organizations and journalists, as well as restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

In the light of that situation, we regret that the Government of Burundi has not resumed its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) since that cooperation was suspended in mid-October 2016. We reiterate our call for the swift conclusion of a memorandum of understanding for the resumption of the Office's activities in Burundi.

Turning to the humanitarian aspect, we support the call made a few minutes ago by Ambassador Lauber with regard to his contact with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR and the Burundian authorities. We also underscore the fact that the human rights situation was discussed at the Human Rights Council in Geneva in September, with that body adopting two key resolutions on the issue. Full respect for the human rights of all Burundians is a necessary condition for holding an inclusive and credible political dialogue and for establishing an environment conducive to the organizing and holding of peaceful and democratic elections in 2020.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to begin by sincerely thanking you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting on the situation in Burundi. I would also like to warmly congratulate your country, Italy, on its assumption of the rotating presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. You, Mr. President, can always count on the full support of my delegation throughout your mandate, which you have conducting with professionalism and great attentiveness since the beginning of the month.

I welcome the presence among us of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the former interim President of Burkina Faso, Mr. Michel Kafando. Through you, Mr. President, I would like to thank him for the presentation of his report on his recent field visit to Bujumbura. I would also like to thank my colleague Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his report and, in particular, for his personal involvement in the peacebuilding process in Burundi for several years.

The purpose of my intervention is to share with members of the Council the new positive developments in Burundi since the previous meeting of the Council in the Chamber in July (see S. PV.8013).

On the political front, the inter-Burundian dialogue continues smoothly. A new round of talks is planned in the next few days in Arusha. Contacts at the highest level through the Special Envoys have intensified in recent days. President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, who, as the Council knows, is in charge of mediating the dialogue process, has dispatched our colleague Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, his Special Envoy, from Uganda to Burundi to meet the national authorities. He was first received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Bujumbura, the capital, and then by the Head of State himself, in the interior of the country. The exchanges between the two parties were fruitful. For his part, the facilitator of the Inter-Burundian dialogue, Mr. Mkapa, held productive consultations on 7 November in Kampala with Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda and mediator of the inter-Burundian dialogue. We would like to recall that Mr. Mkapa received a visit from the Ombudsman in September in the context of consultations aimed at the resumption of the dialogue.

In the same vein, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, who is with us this morning, recently made his second visit to Burundi and the region, during which he held open and productive discussions with national officials. During his stay in Burundi, the Special Envoy received a warm welcome, with a tropical flavour, and full cooperation from national authorities at all levels.

In the same vein, at the initiative of the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, who is here today, Ambassadors of the greater subregion of Southern Africa met at an informal work lunch meeting. At the end of the meeting, participants agreed on the following points.

First, they agreed that the people of Burundi and the region itself must maintain leadership in managing the situation in Burundi. The contribution of other actors outside the region should be limited solely to supporting national and regional efforts.

Secondly, they agreed on the importance for the international community continuing to support Burundi's socioeconomic sectors.

Thirdly, they called for the mobilization of the necessary resources for the organization of free, democratic and peaceful elections in 2020.

Fourthly, they called for support for national and regional efforts in the search for a lasting political solution to the current situation through peaceful means.

Fifthly, they called for the lifting of the economic sanctions of the European Union against Burundi, which have a negative impact not only on the lives of vulnerable groups, such as women and children, but also on the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development and, above all, on the creation of an environment conducive to holding the next elections in 2020.

My delegation hopes that, with the current positive momentum, our partners that have adopted sanctions and punitive measures against Burundi can move in the direction of general peace in Burundi and lift such counterproductive sanctions.

As you can see, Mr. President, regional dynamics remain vibrant. In order to safeguard such regional momentum, it would be desirable to avoid any attempt to create parallel mechanisms that are likely to alter the current trajectory of the dialogue. It must remain first and foremost under the leadership of Burundians and the subregion. The contribution of outside actors, although commendable, should be limited only to support. As much as possible, actors beyond the region must — and this is very important — be careful about taking unilateral decisions and positions of a political nature that undermine the efforts of the East African Community in the management of the Burundian question. That wish was expressed by the Heads of State of Uganda and Tanzania during their bilateral meeting on 11 November in Kampala.

When it comes to strengthening democratic culture, we remain convinced that in a country like ours, which is still making efforts to consolidate peace, justice and security, free, peaceful and transparent elections are an essential part of consolidating the voice of the people in outlining their future. Any alternative of access to power through unconstitutional shortcuts is unacceptable. The coups that we have seen in the past remain for most Burundians a nightmare from which they are trying to wake up today.

Since 2005, there has been a gradual consolidation of the democratic culture in Burundi. In order to cement that culture throughout the country, the President of the Republic has urged all of the country's forces — all 32 Burundian political parties, people from all religious denominations, civil society, the media and the

youth — to act as messengers of peace by strengthening security for all and encouraging peaceful coexistence, social cohesion, reconciliation and national unity.

With regard to constitutional affairs, my delegation wishes to recall that the amendment of the Constitution is an exercise that is exclusively a matter of national sovereignty, not only for Burundi but also for the countries represented here in the Security Council. The issue is the responsibility of Burundians and should not be the subject of debate by external actors in a non-Burundian context. I would like to remind the Council that the current exercise is aimed, first at foremost, at Burundi's long-term stability through an end of the transitional period of our basic law of 2005.

The Constitution of 18 March 2005 has not yet undergone any changes, even though it sets out outdated provisions that are unsuited to the post-transition context and the East African Community Treaty, which Burundi has ratified. Therefore, the committee responsible for proposing amendments has examined the constitutional provisions that are the source of imperfections in maintaining, as they are, provisions that have the merits and democratic values that guarantee stability and peace in Burundi, the protection of the political opposition, the protection of the rights and interests of minorities, the protection of the independence of certain institutions and, above all, the legitimacy of the constitutional order. Almost all the achievements of the Arusha agreement, which are already in the current Constitution, such as ethnic and gender quotas, will be safeguarded.

With regard to the security situation, the situation on the ground since the Council's most recent meeting on Burundi in July is very positive (see S/PV.8013). The security situation is generally good throughout the national territory, and citizens go about their daily activities peaceably. From the most distant hill to the capital of Bujumbura, calm reigns. Burundians, in their rich diversity, enjoy their political and civil rights without any hindrance.

The return to normalcy was recognized and emphasized by the seventh Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which took place on 19 October in Brazzaville. I would mention that that meeting, which included 19 countries, mostly business people, decided to hold its next summit in Bujumbura. That is

an illustration of the emerging regional confidence in our subregion.

In the area of human rights, my country, Burundi, remains convinced that any progress in the area of human rights must be through dialogue, cooperation, the mechanism accepted by all as the Universal Periodic Review and the strengthening of the national capacities of all the relevant stakeholders in the field. Unfortunately, the growing tendency towards the politicization of human rights to satisfy the political interests of some States is hampering the efforts of many countries, including Burundi. Human rights are a universal concept that is amply outlined in several international instruments. It constitutes one of the three pillars of the United Nations. But human rights are increasingly being abused by some States, which, if they are not careful, are deviating from the objectives of the Human Rights Council. Those objectives were mandated to it by the General Assembly when it was created on 15 March 2006 and fortified during the establishment of the mechanism of the Universal Periodic Review on 18 June 2007.

Regrettably, some members have become accustomed to achieving the adoption of resolutions by the Human Rights Council, and other mechanisms established by it, to advance hidden agendas in carefully targeted countries, while turning a blind eye to massive human rights violations in countries under their protection. It cannot be said enough that politicization, selectivity and double standards, which are starting to become blatant in the specific case of Burundi, constitute real hindrances in the process of promoting human rights. The international community therefore should break from that counterproductive stance and address the suffering of the peoples of the world with the same level of attention, and with no other geopolitical considerations.

With respect to national reconciliation, the Government of Burundi, under the leadership of President Pierre Nkurunziza, established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the last phase of the establishment of the institutions provided for in the Arusha agreement in 2000. The members of the Commission have been called upon to move quickly to inform Burundians about the successes and failures of the past, with a view to saying goodbye to the political-ethnic antagonisms that have marked the dark history of our country, and thereby build a bright future for present and future generations. The Commission has

already done an excellent job to date, and it deserves the support of the international community to bring its task to a successful conclusion.

On 8 November, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, who is here with us, emphasized the importance of lending support to the national reconciliation process. Furthermore, the National Assembly adopted a bill few months ago on the functional role of the national council for unity and reconciliation. The new council will work towards unity, equity and reconciliation of the Burundian people and will also be at the forefront in promoting positive values in our country.

With regard to the return of refugees who fled the country for various reasons — which is of great importance — the Government of Burundi continues to call on refugees to return to help build a peaceful, stable and prosperous Burundi. The seventh Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, which brings together 12 countries and took place on 19 October in Brazzaville, made an energetic appeal to the countries of the region that welcomed Burundian refugees to facilitate their voluntary return to their native country. And for those who do not wish to return to their country immediately, for one reason or another, the Summit itself urged host countries to resettle them far from common borders, as stipulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees.

It is similarly very important for the host countries that have generously welcomed Burundian refugees to respect the civilian nature of the refugee camps, in accordance with the requirements of the same Convention and the various appeals of the Council. Those present are aware that the repatriation of refugees is a guarantee of subregional stability, now that among those who have fled, some, including minors, have been recruited, trained, supervised and subsequently enrolled in rebel movements against Burundi. All of that is in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant conventions; the related report of Council is available to the public.

The voluntary repatriation movement continues at a satisfactory pace with the arrival of several thousand citizens who had fled to Tanzania. More than 100,025 Burundians repatriated themselves in 2016, with more than 68,000 up to 15 August, and 7,549 officially after the tripartite meeting held from 29 to 31 August.

According to the planning of that meeting, at least 13,000 refugees will have been officially repatriated from the neighbouring countries of Burundi between 7 September to 31 December. To recap, we estimate that from 2016 to today, more than 175,000 refugees have already returned to their country voluntarily. To encourage the voluntary return movement, the Minister of the Interior paid a working visit to the refugee camps in Tanzania from 15 to 17 November. At the end of his visit, the observation was that more than 40,000 refugees in Tanzania, including 26,000 in the Nduta camp, had registered to voluntarily return to Burundi before the end of the year.

With regard to cooperation between Burundi and the United Nations, that is a subject of paramount importance for partners here. Burundi, just as the members of the Council, maintains the same commitment to strengthen and enhance its relations with the United Nations, in strict respect of its sovereignty and the free will of Burundians, within the framework of its political future. In order to ensure the United Nations presence in the human rights sphere, the draft cooperation agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is being discussed between the two parties and is in its final phase. In the case of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, both parties have agreed to designate ad hoc teams to negotiate and finalize a cooperation agreement. The Special Envoy mentioned that before my statement.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate once again that Burundi has, for more than two years, been subjected to disproportionate political and diplomatic pressure, which intentionally obscures the progress already made and has led to the unjust double-standard treatment over other Member States of the United Nations. That long-standing attitude must cease and give way to fair and equitable treatment. We know that all is not perfect here as elsewhere, but we remain convinced that it is not possible to resolve political misunderstandings by intensifying pressures through political reports and declarations. Burundi is not asking for preferential treatment — far from it. It simply asks that it be treated on its merits and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law.

Moreover, I must say that, thanks to the renewed peace and undeniable control of the situation on the ground, Burundi is not a threat to international peace and security. Based on that observation, the Security Council should consider in the near future to remove Burundi from the list of countries that are on its agenda, so as to address other areas of recent emerging tensions.

The President: There are more names inscribed on the list speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 55 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8110th meeting

Monday, 20 November 2017, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cardini	(Italy)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Lorenzo Soliz
	China	Mr. Li Yongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Abdulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alelu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Besho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Sock
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Vityanko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli Frieri

Agenda

Election of five members of the International Court of Justice (S/2017/619, S/2017/620, S/2017/620/Add.1 and S/2017/621)

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17-39036 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Election of five members of the International Court of Justice (S/2017/619, S/2017/620, S/2017/620/Add.1 and S/2017/621)

The President: In accordance with Article 11 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, the Council will now hold an eighth meeting to elect one member of the International Court of Justice, by further ballots for the one seat remaining to be filled.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from His Excellency Mr. Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, dated 20 November 2017, communicating the decision to withdraw the nomination of Mr. Christopher Greenwood for election to the International Court of Justice. Accordingly, Mr. Greenwood's name is not included on the ballot papers.

May I take that the Council is now ready to proceed to the vote?

It is so decided.

The Council will now proceed to a new ballot. I request the Conference Officer to distribute the ballot papers.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Melikbekyan (Russian Federation) and Mr. Bondjuk (Ukraine) acted as tellers.

The President: Members of the Council should place an "X" in the box next to the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote.

The President: I take it that all the members of the Council have now voted and I ask the Conference Officer to collect the ballot papers.

The President: All the ballot papers have been collected. I should like to remind Council members that in accordance with the established practice, the ballots will not be counted until it has been verified that the ballot papers in the General Assembly have also been

collected. The Council will remain in session pending the receipt of that information.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	15
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	15
Number of abstentions:	0
Required majority:	8
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Dalveer Bhandari	15

Mr. Dalveer Bhandari has accordingly received the required majority of votes in the Security Council. I have communicated the result of the voting to the President of the General Assembly in writing.

I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have just received from the President of the General Assembly the following letter:

"I have the honour to inform you that, at the 57th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, held today for the purpose of electing the one remaining member of the International Court of Justice, Mr. Dalveer Bhandari obtained an absolute majority of votes in the General Assembly."

Accordingly, the same candidate has received the required absolute majority of votes both in the Council and in the General Assembly.

As both the Security Council and the General Assembly have agreed on the same candidates, the jurists Mr. Ronny Abraham, Mr. Dalveer Bhandari, Mr. Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade, Mr. Nawaf Salam and Mr. Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf have been elected to the International Court of Justice for a term of office of nine years, beginning on 6 February 2018.

I should like to congratulate them and wish them every success in the high office to which they have been elected.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank the tellers for their assistance in the conduct of the elections. I would also like to thank all Council members for the constructive manner in which they have engaged in the election process.

The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.